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COMING CLEAN

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MAKE WAY FOR **ANBERLIN**

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KJ-52's PERSONAL *YEARBOOK*

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APR 2007 $3.50 (USA) $4.95 (CAN)

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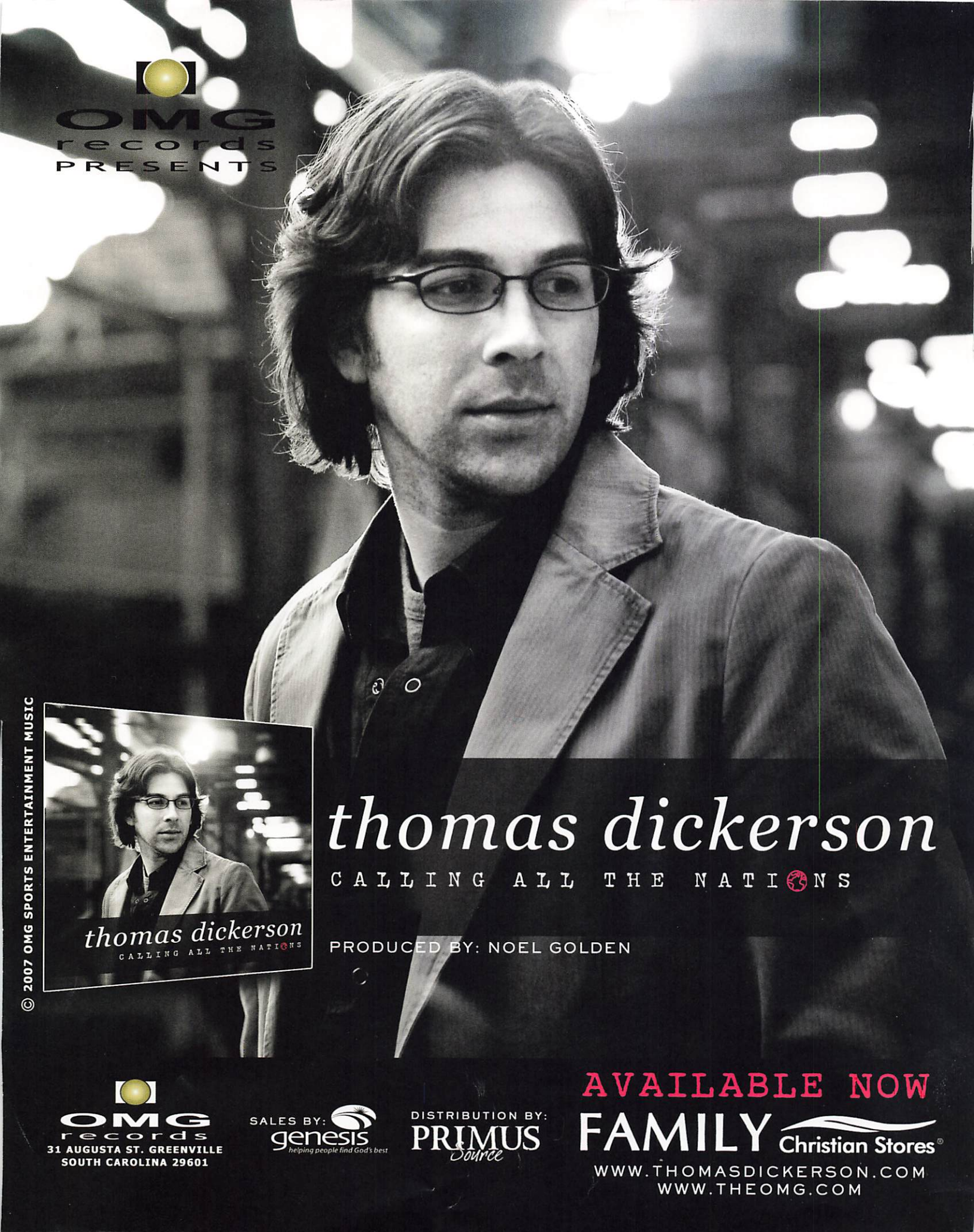
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PRODUCED BY: NOEL GOLDEN
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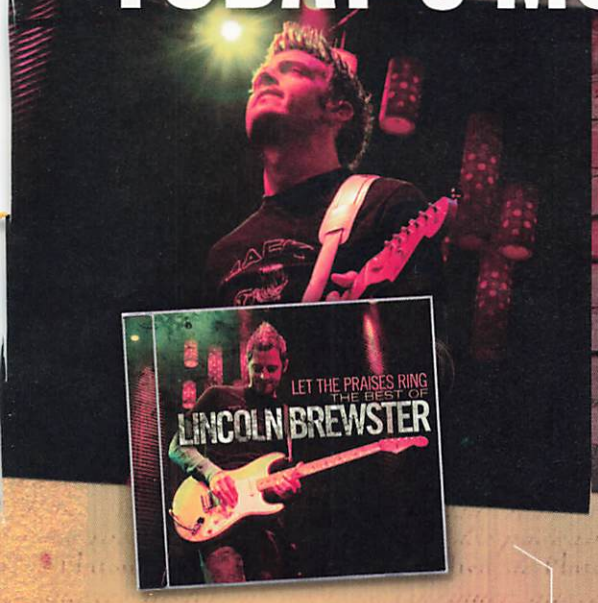

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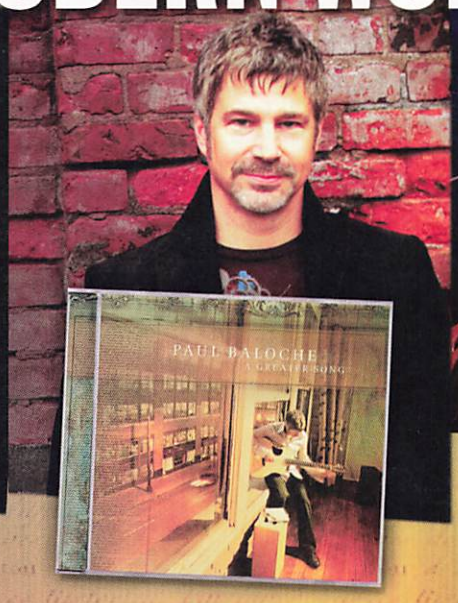

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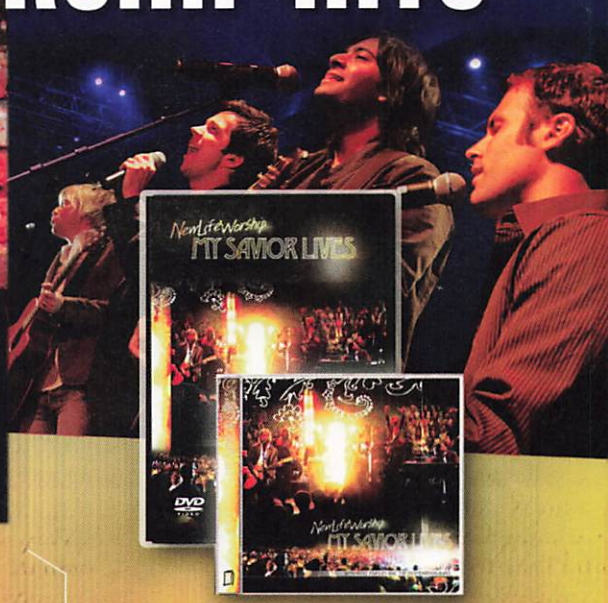

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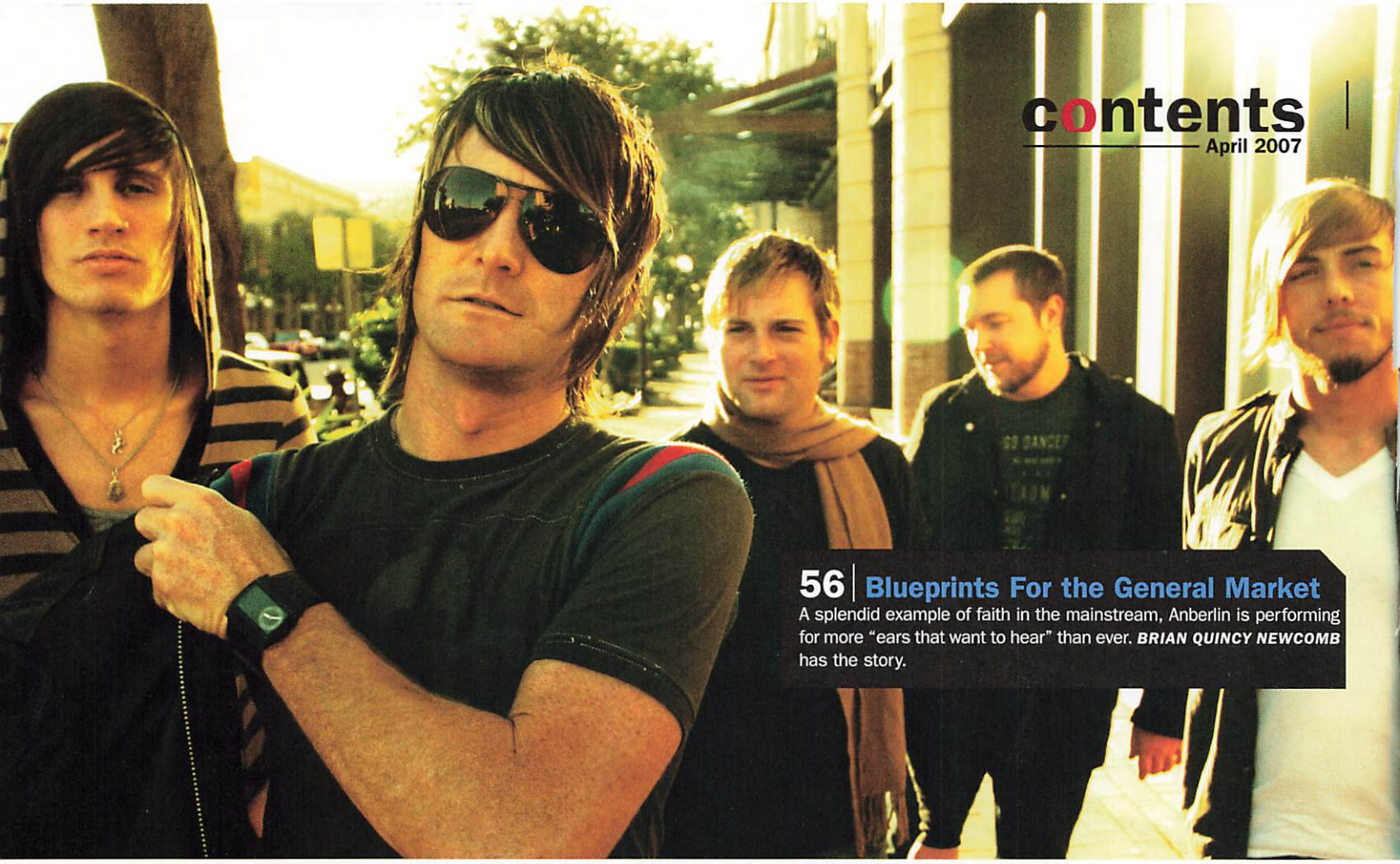
April 2007



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In 1982, *CCM* published an interview exploring the rumored faith of then "up-and-coming" rock band U2. Little did *CCM* know that this article would go down in history as a landmark in revealing the Christian beliefs of Bono & Co. This month, we take a trip down memory lane as the original article by ***TERRY MATTINGLY*** is reprinted in full.

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fromtheeditor

by Jay Swartzendruber

So Long Status Quo

This month we are honored to bring you one of the most significant cover stories in our magazine's 29-year history. We're not only honored, we're humbled. You see, this landmark article isn't something we initiated or even directed as it was being completed. At the risk of sounding melodramatic, it's almost like this cover story chose us. And in a manner of speaking, it did.

When Nichole Nordeman first approached me with the idea of writing an in-depth article on "image and authenticity," I knew we were being handed an important opportunity. Dare I say, *responsibility*? It didn't take a rocket scientist to tell us this thing had cover story written all over it.

The more Nichole described her vision for the article, the more I anticipated the importance of what she was offering. Then she started the process of actually interviewing other artists. "I'm so excited about the cover story," Nichole wrote to me in an email in mid-January. "I have been *blown* away by the artists' honesty in these interviews. What I'm getting from them is nothing short of liberating... Just about every artist I talk to says, '*Thank you* for writing this story...I'm so relieved.'"

Later, Nichole would tell me, "I feel like this story might be one of the most important contributions I have the opportunity to make to Christian music."

Wow. Perhaps I should just sign off right here and leave it at that...I'm certainly tempted to. But I want you to know more about what Nichole's done for us—for you.

We benefited from her thoughtfulness and creativity in more ways than one. In addition to her thematic vision, initiating compelling interviews with her peers and, of course, writing at a superior level, she generously made herself available to brainstorm with us about photography, design and general presentation. Nichole was the one who thought of featuring the artists' high school photographs alongside their latest publicity shots. And going behind the scenes at a photo shoot to show us styling and makeup in progress? Her idea. Then came the front cover...

Without knowing she was about to put herself in an extremely vulnerable position, Nichole made an unusual recommendation. "Rather than featuring an artist on the front, why don't you design a concept cover—something that will jump out at people in a new way, in the same way that the words of these artists feel fresh and new and courageous?"

She was on to something—and we knew it. The cover for this story needed to "say something." Our editorial team huddled with Mary Sergent, our senior art director, and started kicking around ideas. Eventually, as she's often want to do, Mary came up with the home run proposition—create a front cover that literally portrays what this article is: *artists coming clean on image and authenticity*. To pull this off, we needed an artist willing to take a risk.

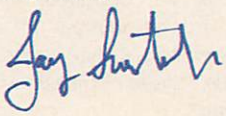
Can you imagine being Nichole and having us come back to you and say, "That concept cover suggestion of yours was great. Thanks for that. So here's the deal. We want to put a close-up shot of you on the front of *CCM*...one side of your face and hair all glammed up and the other side looking simple and down to earth. It'll be great. Really."

Nichole and her fellow artists were already taking unprecedented risks for this cover story. Fortunately for us, she was willing to take another. The one reservation that Nichole expressed was her conviction that "this story is not about me...I am not the story." She didn't want the use of an artist's image to detract from the significance of what was being communicated. Amen. (*Nichole, we hope you're as pleased as we are with how the cover turned out—that we kept our promise to deliver on "what" more so than "who." Again, thank you for everything.*)

The timing of this cover story is interesting on a number of levels. During the last several months, we at the magazine have been doing a lot of thinking about image and authenticity in other ways as well. You see, a few years ago, we initiated a fairly substantial redesign of *CCM* in an effort to enhance its visual presentation. While we were quite pleased with how it turned out, imagine our surprise when *CCM* won *Folio*'s coveted Gold Ozzie Award for "Best Magazine Redesign." We were all but speechless as a "who's who" of the industry's top editors, publishers and consultants—who served as judges—placed us alongside *National Geographic*, *Elle*, *Muscle & Fitness*, *Popular Science* and *Architectural Record*...2004's other winners of the highest award for design excellence.

Well folks, with all due respect (to our history), that was then. I'm pleased to announce that with next month's issue of *CCM*, we're going to unveil the 2007 redesign that's going to carry this magazine into the next decade. And more than just a new look, you're going to discover that we've got a few other surprises up our sleeves. Frankly, I haven't been this excited about my job since the actual day Salem Publishing offered it to me. And know this: as we "imagine ourselves anew," I pledge that we will strive to both reflect and champion authenticity. I encourage you to hold us to that.

Respectfully,



Jay@CCMmagazine.com

CCM MAGAZINE

Your Christian Music Magazine Since 1978

volume 29 issue 10

For those whose lives are strengthened through faith-informed music, *CCM Magazine* goes behind the scenes to celebrate the artistry of Christian music.

CCM Magazine is a publication of Salem Publishing, a division of Salem Communications.

CCM Magazine

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Subscriptions/Customer Service *CCM*, 104 Woodmont Blvd., Ste 300, Nashville, TN 37205, **800/527-5226** or **subscriptions@salempublishing.com.** Annual subscription rates: United States, $21.95/one year; Canada, (U.S. funds) $29.95 per year; all other countries, (U.S. funds) $35.95 (surface). For address changes or other inquiries, please include both old and new addresses and mailing label. Allow four to six weeks for new subscriptions to begin.

Cover photo: Nicole Nelson represented by Those 3 Reps
Cover makeup & hair design: Angela Angel angelaangel.com
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feedback

SWITCHFOOT

DEFINED BY FAITH, NOT GENRE

I just wanted to say I really enjoy reading your magazine! Your article on Christians in mainstream music ("Preachers, Poets & Prophets," February) was surprising and enlightening. It's nice to see more artists trying to reach out to other listeners. You guys have opened my heart and mind through your amazing articles! I am so glad I found you. Through your mag, I am more aware of Christian artists such as Flyleaf, Future of Forestry and KJ-52. Thanks and keep up the great work!

Eleanor Lira
Modesto, CA

For many years the topic of "What is considered a Christian band?" has been discussed more and more. For a long time I felt that unless a band clearly stated their faith, kept a good public image and played at Christian music festivals, they weren't really Christians and probably didn't much help anyone get saved. My opinion has changed. I have seen people I know with messed up lives led to Christ through the music from groups like U2, Switchfoot, Sixpence None the Richer and Skillet. We Christians don't have to listen to U2 if we don't want to. But I think we should realize and accept that it may be God's own plan to use bands, like U2, to guide unbelievers to some of the music more rooted in Christianity, when they never would have listened before. I have personally seen it happen, and it's a wonderful thing!

Richeldis Nelson, via email

I was delighted when I received the article in the February edition of *CCM* that discussed what it means to be an artist of faith in today's mainstream music scene. You made a wonderful statement when you wrote that we, as music artists, are "Christians by faith, not genre." Thank you for putting out such a wonderful magazine with such good reviews on music.

Erika J. Bates
Quarryville, PA

Thank you, Erika, but we must give credit where credit is due. It was Switchfoot bassist Tim Foreman who originally made the articulate statement that we "borrowed" for one of that article's subtitles. In a 2003 interview with Rolling Stone, *Foreman said, "We're Christian by faith, not genre."*

WELCOME HOME, BRIAN

I disagree with what "Anonymous" wrote about Brian Littrell being on the cover of *CCM*'s Readers' Choice issue ("Feedback," March). I think he is more than deserving. While in the Backstreet Boys he always maintained a clean image and noted his Christianity often. I think he has the right to grow up and do what he was meant to do, and that is to sing Christian music. Give him a chance. He has a beautiful voice and sings from his heart. He is very sincere and deserved all the readers' votes. You couldn't find a sweeter guy.

Anonymous Also!!!
Minnesota

"Anonymous" wrote that he/she didn't think Brian Littrell deserved to be on your cover and questioned his sincerity in Christian music due to his success in the secular market as a Backstreet Boy. I was so happy to see that Christian music fans have embraced him. I have been listening to Christian music for many years, but before I discovered Christian music, I was a huge Backstreet Boys fan. Brian has always shared his faith openly and proudly. In his "thank yous" in every Backstreet Boys CD he quotes Bible verses and always points to God when people ask about his talents. Brian is in a unique situation because he has so many secular fans who are listening to his Christian music just because they are fans of Brian. I think it is a great way for him to share Jesus with them, because, as Christians, our job is to tell everyone about Jesus.

Megan Riley, via email

TAKING *CCM* TO SCHOOL

In February's "InReview Music" section, I think your reviewer is in the wrong when he talks about the *Amazing Grace* "Inspired By" soundtrack. He states, "A few songs do fall short, including Jars of Clay's 'I Need Thee Every Hour' and Avalon's feeble attempt at 'Great Is Thy Faithfulness' which finds the group sounding more like a duet than a powerhouse quartet." If you read the liner notes in Avalon's new album, *Faith: A Hymns Collection*, they wanted to make it sound like a duet. Janna Long and Melissa Greene were excited about the song. Your writer obviously does not know Avalon. Avalon does not have all four people sing on every song. And I think Jars of Clay has a very good rendition of "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Marie, via email

RETRACTIONS:

In February's issue, we mistitled the new theme song Nichole Nordeman wrote for the Women of Faith conferences. The song's correct title is "Finally Free." We encourage you to check out "Finally Free," one of the two new recordings which appear on her album Recollection: The Best of Nichole Nordeman *(Sparrow). Visit* ***nicholenordeman.com*** *for more info.*

In our March issue, meanwhile, we didn't cite Adam Cunningham's correct record label in his "Ones to Watch" profile. Cunningham's new self-titled album is released on Trackstar Recordworks and is distributed by Provident-Integrity Distribution. For more information, visit ***trackstarrecordworks.com****.*

We welcome your comments. Email: feedback@CCMmagazine.com or address your letter to: Feedback, CCM Magazine, *104 Woodmont Blvd., Suite 300, Nashville, TN 37205, fax 615/385-4112, Attn: Feedback. Always include your full name, address and phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.*

insider

Dove picks, GRAMMY® winners, 5 Questions with David Crowder and more

Pick'n (on) the Doves

One of *CCM*'s favorite nights of the year hits on Wednesday, April 25. That's when the 38th Annual GMA Dove Awards take place in Music City. And while *CCM*'s editor, Jay Swartzendruber, may have predicted six out of seven Dove picks correctly last year, we know pure luck when we see it. That's why, this year, we're bringing in veteran troublemaker Chris Well (aka the "List-O-Rama" guy) to bring Jay back to reality.

Male Vocalist of the Year

Jeremy Camp, Mark Hall, Mat Kearney, Aaron Shust, Chris Tomlin

JAY: *Chris Tomlin won this category last time around and, if anything, the year he's had since then has been even more impressive. That said, I also have to give major props to Mat Kearney. With the release of his sophomore album,* Nothing Left to Lose *(Columbia/Inpop), he's made major inroads into the general market: touring with John Mayer and Sheryl Crow, prominent video play on VH1, live performances on late night TV and national morning shows and strategic song placement on multiple episodes of various hit TV series. And he's just begun!*

CHRIS: *Way to be decisive, Jay. (Ooh, and choosing both a praise & worship artist and a secular artist—lukewarm, much?) I'll have to go with Deitrick Haddon.*

Female Vocalist of the Year

Natalie Grant, Krystal Meyers, Christy Nockels, Nichole Nordeman, Rebecca St. James

JAY: *While there's no clear leader in this category, my vote is with the thoughtful singer/songwriter who was Christian radio's No. 1 most-played female artist during 2006. What did it take to land that title? She had 13—yes,* thirteen*—different songs being played at radio. During 2006 alone, those 13 songs were spun more than 61,000 times on the air. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Nichole Nordeman…*

CHRIS: *Great, Jay—a CCM columnist. I pick Cindy Morgan.*

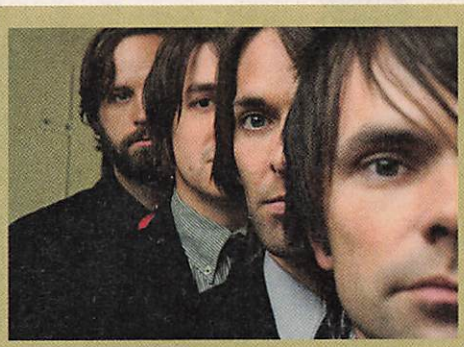
Group of the Year

BarlowGirl, Casting Crowns, David Crowder Band, Jars of Clay, MercyMe

JAY: *Jars of Clay dished out the best album of its career last year.* Good Monsters *(Essential) is not only the band's finest work, but it may be the most musically and lyrically profound record to grace the Christian market since Bruce Cockburn's 1979 treatise* Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws *(Columbia/Myrrh)…OK…OK…maybe not that far back, but you get the picture. Combine*

that with Jars' never-been-better live show and, most importantly, the band's relentless efforts on behalf of the world's poor, sick and disenfranchised, and you have, well, bonafide heroes.

CHRIS: *Wow, we have never gone this long without you mentioning U2. I'll have to pick The Fray.*



Artist of the Year

Casting Crowns, The Crabb Family, Jars of Clay, Stellar Kart, Third Day, tobyMac, Chris Tomlin

JAY: *Jars of Clay. Though, given tobyMac's immediate impact with* Portable Sounds *(ForeFront) at press time, maybe they should go ahead and hand him next year's bird while they're at it.*

CHRIS: *Did you even listen to that Tonéx record? Oak Park:* 921'06 *(Nureau Ink) was the most brilliant, most vulnerable statement of the year.*

New Artist of the Year

DecembeRadio, Leeland, Pocket Full of Rocks, Aaron Shust, Ayiesha Woods

JAY: *I can't remember the last time a debut album swept me off my feet the way Leeland's* Sound of Melodies *(Essential) has. Their song "Tears of the Saints," alone, is worth the price of admission. Another thing I can't remember? The last time I saw veteran artists swoon over a new band this way. And for good reason.*

CHRIS: *We finally agree on something—is that a sign of the apocalypse?*

cont. on Pg. 8

> crowning achievements: casting crowns' sophomore disc, *Lifesong* (Beach Street) is now certified platinum >>

cont. from Pg. 7

Producer of the Year

Brown Bannister, Ed Cash, Ian Eskelin, Nathan Nockels, Otto Price

JAY: *Okay, this year I have to draw my line in the sand. (Actually, I like to think it's a bigger line than it really is.) The two previous years, I've praised the honors heaped on Ed Cash. You see, I'm a fan. But folks, something is seriously wrong here when multi-talented studio whiz Aaron Sprinkle is still not even getting nominated. Nominated? Nominated nothing! He should be winning this category right now. Even before he masterfully produced Anberlin's recent breakout,* Cities *(Tooth & Nail), Sprinkle's 2006 production credits included recordings by Jeremy Camp, Hawk Nelson, MxPx, Kutless, Dead Poetic, Adie, Mainstay and others. Is this shutout a Nashville thing? (Sprinkle's based in Seattle.) Is it because he works almost exclusively with Tooth & Nail? Is it because, rather than sticking with one or two genres, he produces pop, hardcore, hip-hop, punk, etc.? Seriously, what's the deal?*

CHRIS: *I'll have to go with Ralph Winter—he produced the* Fantastic Four *movie; he produced the* X-Men *movie; he produced* Thr3e. *The man is a genius.*

Song of the Year

"Bless The Broken Road" (Selah), **"Cry Out To Jesus"** (Third Day), **"Drifter"** (DecembeRadio), **"God's Still God"** (Young Harmony), **"Imagine Me"** (Kirk Franklin), **"Made To Worship"** (Chris Tomlin), **"Me And Jesus"** (Stellar Kart), **"My Savior My God"** (Aaron Shust), **"Nothing Left To Lose"** (Mat Kearney), **"Praise You In This Storm"** (Casting Crowns)

JAY: *It's two years in a row for Chris Tomlin in this category..."Made to Worship." (Special props to producer Ed Cash's personal assistant, Stephan Sharp, who had the original idea for the song and finished writing it with Cash and Tomlin!)*

CHRIS: *Were any of these songs played on "Smallville"?*

For the complete list of GMA Dove Award nominees, and to find out when the nationally syndicated show will be televised in your area, go to **gospelmusic.org**.

P.O.D. SIGNS WITH INO/COLUMBIA

Multi-Platinum rock act **P.O.D.** has inked a record deal with INO/Columbia Records. The band's INO/Columbia debut, slated for a late summer release, will be the first P.O.D. disc with original guitarist Marcos Curiel since 2001's triple Platinum *Satellite* (Atlantic). At press time, producer Jay Baumgardner (Alien Ant Farm, Helmet) and P.O.D. were in a Los Angeles studio working on the yet-to-be titled album's pre-production. Go to **payableondeath.com** for more info.

GRAMMATIC EFFECT

When this year's GRAMMY® Awards took place, it was a mainstream R&B star who showed the way...

Third Day parties GRAMMY® style with Brian Baumgartner ("The Office").

"I just have to thank my Father God, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," said recording artist **Mary J. Blige** when her album, *The Breakthrough* (Geffen), landed her first ever GRAMMY® Award (for "Best R&B Album"). After turning to her notes, she continued, "I just want to thank God for this album and this award for this album. It shows that I'm... growing into a better human being."

Blige's remarks at the 49th Annual GRAMMY® Awards in February struck a poignant tone unlike the gratuitous "shout outs" to God that pop stars are sometimes known to include in acceptance speeches. When she won her second GRAMMY,® Blige took the podium saying, "Praise you, Father. Thank you, Jesus...It's in the valley that we realize who we really are. It's in the success that we realize who we really are. I want to use my success to build bridges, not to burn 'em."

While it was Blige who repeatedly pointed heavenward during the GRAMMY®'s national broadcast, Christian music's biggest names were honored in seven "Gospel" categories during the show's pre-televised ceremonies. **Kirk Franklin** won two of them—his fourth and fifth career wins—as "Imagine Me" was named "Best Gospel Song" and *Hero* (Gospo Centric) took the "Best Contemporary R&B Gospel Album" title.

Blues guitar phenom **Jonny Lang** won his first GRAMMY,® meanwhile, when *Turn Around* (A&M) was named "Best Rock or Gospel Album." **Third Day** welcomed its third GRAMMY® as *Wherever You Are* (Essential) topped the "Best Pop/Contemporary Gospel Album" category. **Yolanda Adams** picked up her fourth when the song "Victory" (from *The Gospel* original motion picture soundtrack) was named "Best Gospel Performance." **Israel & New Breed** were honored with their first GRAMMY® as *Alive In South Africa* (Integrity Gospel) was named "Best Traditional Gospel Album." **Randy Travis** landed his sixth as *Glory Train* (Word) won for "Best Southern, Country, or Bluegrass Gospel Album." In other country music-related categories, **Carrie Underwood**'s "Jesus Take The Wheel" won the GRAMMY® Awards for "Best Country Song" and "Best Female Country Vocal Performance." Underwood was also named "Best New Artist." For a complete listing of GRAMMY® Award winners visit **grammy.com**.

JAY SWARTZENDRUBER

I WANT MYCCM (.ORG)

In honor of GMA Week this month, it's "Two-for April!" OK...so it doesn't rhyme. It's still pretty cool—**TWO featured podcasts** each week this month at **myCCM.org**:

April 2
Nichole Nordeman & Bethany Dillon

April 9
Pillar & T-Bone

April 16
Bebo Norman & Until June

April 23
Nicole C. Mullen & DecembeRadio

April 30
Derek Webb & Vicky Beeching

>> SHIPPING MORE THAN 1 MILLION COPIES; THE CROWNS JOIN LABEL MATES JARS OF CLAY AS THE ONLY TWO CHRISTIA

Deas Vail's Brave New World

After a long, hard road, this band is ready for...the beginning.

The fact that Arkansas' **Deas Vail** is even still a band is evidence that something bigger seems to be going on behind the scenes. The act's melodic and intricate alternative sound reflects fruit born of struggle, heartbreak and overwhelming hopefulness and optimism.

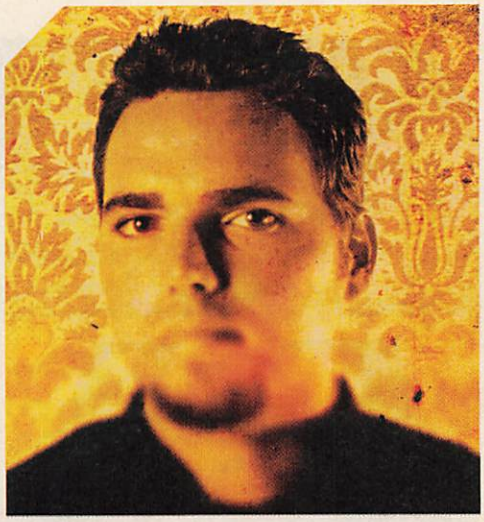
After forming in college, core members **Wes Blaylock** (vocals), **Laura Beth Hudson** (keys) and **Kelsey Harelson** (drums) endured several line-up changes in just their first couple years together. As the band was in the midst of recording its independent album, *This Place is Painted Red*, in 2004, bassist **Bobby Jackson** was killed in a bicycle accident. Though stunned, the members of Deas Vail soldiered on, knowing they had a calling and purpose set before them.

After numerous acclaimed shows the band was introduced to **Relient K** producer and Rambler Records exec. **Mark Lee Townsend**. Though the indie album he had originally been handed was rough around the edges, he could hear through the shortcomings that the band had some real talent. He went to see Deas Vail perform at a popular club in Arkansas and was blown away by the group's set. "I was amazed," he says of the night in Little Rock. "They put on a great show. All the elements were there!"

Then Deas Vail found out Rambler's parent company, BHT Entertainment, had imploded. "It was obviously very stressful," Blaylock remembers. "This was our first dealing with a record company, and they went under!" Thankfully, Townsend—Rambler's core visionary—founded a new venture with the mainstream market in mind called Brave New World, and though just over a year late, Deas Vail's impressive *All the Houses Look the Same* hit stores in March. "Sure, we're a year late," Blaylock admits. "But, in hindsight, I'm glad we had this time to develop and mature."

With a sound in the neighborhood of Mew, Sigur Ros, Copeland, Mute Math, Death Cab for Cutie and Esther Drang, and a heart set on inspiring hope and restoration in the lives of its audience, Deas Vail is already living up to its unique name. Matching the band's adaptation of the ancient Latin word for "God" with the old French word for "humble servant," Deas Vail had found not only a name, but a mission. "That's where our heart is," Blaylock continues. "I'm sure there will be more tests, and I look forward to them and to having the faith to get through them. We still believe God is doing something special here, and we're still trying to figure it out. I guess we always will be."

JOHN J. THOMPSON



Riddle's Answer

How does an artist's music get so popular without him even having an album released?

A name new to most, **Jeremy Riddle**, already finds himself keeping good company in Christian music. His first radio single, "Sweetly Broken," became 2006's overall No. 6 song of the year at Christian AC radio, even before his debut album *Full Attention* (Varietal) recently hit the shelves, putting his name alongside heavy hitters Chris Tomlin, Casting Crowns, Third Day and Aaron Shust.

It's an early milestone that Riddle puts into perspective. "I think I've thoroughly learned the lesson that it is impossible to predict how God is going to use your life. I never set my sights on being an artist in the Christian music world or having a successful radio single," says the artist/worship leader whose original music path was in a sought-after mainstream band.

Riddle's focus for the last six years has been as the middle school youth pastor and worship leader for Anaheim Vineyard in Anaheim, Calif., a position that inspired songs for his debut project. "Many of the songs on *Full Attention* flowed from active seasons of ministry in the local church—and all of them have flowed from deeply personal places in my journey with the Lord."

Riddle will continue his work in Anaheim, even as he adds chart-topping recording artist to his resumé. "My only assignment is to look to the Good Shepherd, hear the good works He has for me to do and obediently fulfill them... If my God-given assignments continue to be in the local church [which I will always be a part of], then so be it. If my God-given assignments go beyond the local church, then so be it."

JACKIE A. CHAPMAN

tists in RIAA history to have their first two albums certified platinum • Right On: Relient K's "must>>>

Through Christ Alone

One-time Christian music frontrunner Michael English has penned an engaging new autobiography titled *The Prodigal Comes Home* (Thomas Nelson). When we discovered the humility and redemptive content throughout its pages, we welcomed the opportunity to share his open letter to you, our *CCM* readers...

Thirteen years ago, I was living what some people would consider a dream. As a member of the Gaither Vocal Band, I had won GRAMMY® awards. Between 1992 and 1994, my solo career took off, and the Gospel Music Association blessed me with a bunch of Dove Awards. I was married to a gorgeous woman and father to a daughter who was the jewel of my life. I was wealthy and famous—didn't even carry my suitcases anymore.

And yet, you may be wondering, who *is* this guy?

The fact that you don't know—or may not have heard from me in a while—testifies to an important truth: God is not mocked.

In 1994 I had an adulterous affair with another singer. She became pregnant and, just days after winning GMA's "Artist of the Year," I turned in my Doves and left Christian music. Now, it's time for the Dove Awards again, and on this occasion, *CCM* has graciously allowed me this space to tell you a little bit about what happened between 1994 and now.

I want to say right up front that this is not an "I'm sorry I had an affair, now please buy my records" letter. Rather, this is a lesson of how the temptations of fame and fortune took a man down, nearly to his death.

Back in the '90s, I seemed to have it going on. My first solo album sold 250,000 copies. My face was on the cover of magazines. I sang with Dolly Parton. I sang at the Super Bowl prayer breakfast. I even sang at an astronaut's funeral. I was "Mr. Christian"—on the outside.

But on the inside, I was an empty shell and a traitor to my family. I slept with another man's wife and confessed it publicly. The press went crazy. Even *People* and *Newsweek* picked up the story. I had shamed the name of Christ in front of the whole world, giving more ammunition to people who think that Christianity is a joke.

But the world didn't see what happened after I left Christian music. My public fall from grace opened a trap door into a private hell of drug addiction. I wound up broke, living out of a car and in trouble with the law. I bounced in and out of rehab, sometimes barely alive.

I wrote a book about all that. It's an awful story with a great ending: That God in His mercy reached down to shepherd home an unworthy prodigal like me. Because I was weak and stubborn, the road to recovery sometimes wound around blind curves. Sometimes I slipped off the trail entirely. I've had to ask a lot of people to forgive me for that, including Christian music fans all over the country.

And God has been faithful: Not only did He deliver me from addiction, he also restored my broken relationships, and even gave me a family again.

Thank you for allowing me to share my heart with you. I may never sell a lot of records again, but the God I'm singing about now is the One who saved my life, literally, and threw open His arms to welcome me home. That kind of puts it all in perspective.

God bless you all,
Michael English

DARE YOU TO CHOOSE

In an unprecedented experimental move, **Switchfoot** is allowing fans to help choose its setlists in each city for the band's spring tour in support of its new album, ***Oh! Gravity.*** (Columbia/Sparrow). In addition to letting fans pick the songs for the band's shows, Switchfoot is also creating limited edition live albums sold exclusively after every show containing select cuts from that night's performance. Log on to **switchfoot.com** to vote for the setlists in your city, and visit **switchfootbootlegs.com** to hear "bootlegs" from fans in other cities.

I WANT MY GMC

Hawk Nelson, **Family Force 5** and **Michael W. Smith** joined **Alabama**, **The Clark Sisters** and several other artists in late February to tape 10 live sets for the **Gospel Music Channel**, the first 24-hour faith-based music entertainment network. "We are so stoked to be able to have our live show on TV!" said Hawk Nelson's Jason Dunn shortly before the taping. "We are hoping it will be as fun for TV viewers as it is in a live venue, and we are grateful to share our music with the Gospel Music Channel." For more information on the rock, pop, country and soul gospel performances, go to **gospelmusicchannel.com**.

SUNSETS, SUSHI AND...*SQUIRRELS?*

At press time, the **David Crowder Band** was preparing to unveil a brand new animated music video for its current single "foreverandever etc." involving David Crowder's infamous goatee and a massive squirrel invasion. Recently, "foreverandever etc." broke into the Top 30 of *Radio & Records*' Christian AC and CHR charts. Intrigued? Visit **davidcrowderband.com** for more info.

>> Have Done Something Right" Video Landed MTV's "TRL" First Look Premiere in early March • Something Wort

getreal

by Gregory Rumburg

Nicole C. Mullen: Living Local with a Global Reach

"I think everybody has something to give."

That's according to Nicole C. Mullen, who believes sharing the idea of hope with others is as important as experiencing it for yourself. It's a lesson the award-winning singer/songwriter learned as a child, and it remains a core value for her today.

"I remember being a very impressionable young lady," she says of growing up in Cincinnati, Ohio. "There was a woman in my church. Her name was Cecilia. She took time to encourage me...and that was definitely part of the seed that God used to call me into who He is still [wanting] me to be.

"I remember, even as a young girl, thinking, 'If it's ever my turn to do the same, to encourage somebody else, I want to make sure I'm as responsible with that and with their hearts as Cecilia is with mine,'" she says.

Today, Mullen's Baby Girls Club, an informal outreach program for girls located in Franklin Tenn., helps Nicole fulfill that responsibility.

"We have girls from the age of five on up to 17, 18 years old. Once a week we get together and we dance. We sew; we eat; we talk; we do homework; we act. We do all kinds of different things to build leadership qualities in these ladies. We challenge them, [sharing] there's hope for them in Jesus Christ. We challenge them that it doesn't matter where you start, but it matters where you land. Everyone has the chance to finish well in Christ."

Baby Girls Club is successful enough that Mullen is thinking about taking the concept national. Yet, she's quick to point out that starting a new program isn't the only way to make a difference.

"I think you can jump off something that's already working. There are plenty of outreach [programs] and ministries in communities and in churches that need extra hands." One group Mullen supports is International Needs Network and its work in Ghana to free Trokosi slaves. In that country, some girls and women are handed over by families to religious leaders as atonement for sins. These females becomes slaves for life and are forced into sexual relations. International Needs Network works to negotiate freedom, then re-assimilates the women into society through compassionate care and training. Nicole has seen the need firsthand, noting early on that freed women have to be taught again how to smile. Then, healing begins.

"You can so see the difference in those girls. They're the ones used to hearing about the Lord. They eat three meals a day and have indoor toilets. They have reasons to smile." For Mullen, this kind of transformation is a stark reminder that we all have an opportunity to make a difference.

"The best investment we can make is into the life of another human being."

Learn more about IN Network at **innetwork.org**.

FANFARE

Something Beautiful

Reigning GMA "Female Vocalist of the Year" **Natalie Grant** and husband, producer Bernie Herms, welcomed two bundles of love into the world just two days after Valentine's Day. **Grace Ana** was born the morning of February 16 at 4 lbs. and 3 oz. Following one minute later, her sister, **Isabella Noelle** arrived at 5 lbs., 9 oz. Grant recently put the finishing touches on her new studio project slated for release later this year. For updates on the twins and Natalie's new album, stay tuned to **nataliegrant.com**.

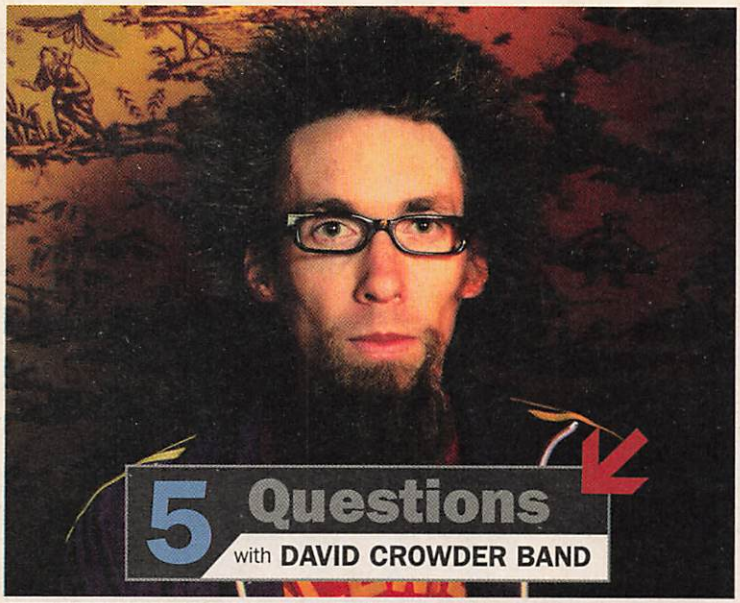
Kristin Schweain (formerly of **ZOEgirl**) and her husband Ryan welcomed their first child, **Stella Rose Elisabeth**, born on February 13. She weighed 7lbs., 12oz. and was 21 1/2 inches long. Currently, Kristin is in the studio recording her piano/ vocal-based solo debut, which she describes as "ambient" musically and "personal and candid" lyrically. Visit **myspace.com/ kristinschweainmusic** for info.

Drew Cline, solo artist as well as lead singer for **NewSong**, and his wife Lori recently welcomed their first daughter. **Daisy Joy** was born January 25, weighing in at 8 lbs., 1 oz. and 21 inches long. The new parents are no strangers to the Christian music industry. As former director of national promotions for World Label Group, Lori recently started her own independent promotions company called Brighter Promotions, while Drew is set to release his first solo project this summer. Visit **drewcline.com** for more info.

Virtue's **Heather Martin** and husband Colin welcomed a baby boy into their family. Colin Alex Martin, II made his debut January 31 at 7 lbs., 5 oz, and 19 inches long, wearing his father's name proudly. Heather is currently enjoying life as a mom. To keep up with Virtue and learn more about their current album, *Testimony* (Verity), log on to **virtuegirls.com**.

LINDSAY WILLIAMS

saying: new aaron shust record, whispered and shouted (brash), set for june 5 release • it's on: superchick >>



5 Questions with DAVID CROWDER BAND

If you're wondering why the DAVID CROWDER BAND hasn't been on the road last month or this month, it's because the Texan six-piece is entrenched in a studio recording its new album. Meanwhile, fans are curious to hear the work of guitarist Taylor "The Kid" Johnson who recently joined the DCB when Jason Solley decided to step down after seven years with the group. And Crowder himself? At the moment, we're most curious to hear his responses to our five favorite questions.

1. What five words best describe you?
I'm uncertain as to whether it would be best to answer directly, making no assumptions, like: "I am a human being." "My name is David Crowder." Or I could answer in a manner more suited to a physical description, you know, if you saw me breaking-and-entering or something and needed a police sketch: tall, skinny, beard, glasses, slouches. But I rarely commit crime, so, I don't know how particularly useful that would be. Or I could lean more like, say, activity oriented: "Enjoys outdoors, yet isn't much." I'm just saying this question is way too hard, so I decline to answer.

2. What's your most embarrassing moment?
Being unable to give a concise answer to question No. 1.

3. What's one question you've never been asked (and the answer)?
For a while now, I've observed this question appearing in the "5 questions with *CCM*" and, each time, have thought to myself, "Cool. My answer to this question would be the question." As in, I have never been asked: "What question have you never been asked before?" That would be the answer.

4. What's a song you wish you had written?
"Happy Birthday." Or anything by Jerry Reed, such as, "East Bound and Down."

5. What's the best spiritual advice you've ever been given?
"Pray for just enough illumination for the next step, and then the courage to take it."

THIS MONTH @ CCMMAGAZINE.COM

Did somone say "contests"?

>>We're giving away copies of these new DVDs, available in stores now. Please enter all contests by April 30 for your chance to win.

Journey back in history as the greatest story ever told is brought to life in the epic drama ***The Nativity Story*** (New Line). This inspirational tale of extraordinary faith and love chronicles the arduous journey of Mary and Joseph, a divine pregnancy and the miraculous birth of Jesus. In addition to DVDs, we're also including resource DVDs and T-shirts in the prize package.

Set against the sweepingly romantic and breathtakingly picturesque backdrop of the American frontier, ***"Christy": The Complete Series*** (Fox) is a compelling story based on the best-selling novel from Catherine Marshall. The series features an all-star cast, including **Kellie Martin** ("E.R.," "Life Goes On") and Emmy®-winning and Golden Globe®-nominated **Tyne Daly** ("Judging Amy," "Cagney & Lacey"). A collection the entire family will love, *"Christy": The Complete Series* is presented on four double-sided discs and features all 19 episodes.

Honored with the Dove Foundation Seal of Approval and praised by critics, ***Everyone's Hero*** (Fox) was the dream project of the late actor/director **Christopher Reeve**, who served as the film's original director and executive producer. A funny and inspirational tale of a young boy who believes he can make a difference despite overwhelming odds, *Everyone's Hero* features an incredible voice cast line-up of Hollywood all-star sluggers including **Whoopi Goldberg**, **Forest Whitaker**, **William H. Macy**, **Rob Reiner** and **Brian Dennehy**.

Like strawberries? How about shortcake? Then you'll love ***Strawberry Shortcake: The Sweet Dreams Movie*** (20th Century Fox). Penned by veteran screenwriter **Carter Crocker** (*Jungle Book 2*, *Winnie the Pooh* series, *Return to Neverland*), this all-new CGI-animated feature is Strawberry Shortcake's first-ever big screen adventure. It's fun for kids from 1 to 92!

2WG Media, which first made headlines with the success of the 2005 release "Who Rules?" game series, has received high acclaim for ***"Who Rules?" Almighty Edition***, which features over 1,000 biblical facts and trivia questions. This DVD game recently landed the No. 1 sales spot on Amazon.com by beating out the incredibly popular video game "Madden NFL '07."

>>Congratulations to the winners of our recent contests for ***Flicka*** and ***The Passion of the Christ - Definitive Edition*** DVDs. You can always find a list of winners online—there's a link to the winners' page from our "Contests Central" page.

*There's more where this came from! In fact, we frequently add fun items to the site. Sign up to receive our weekly **CCMmagazine.com** newsletters and get the scoop on news updates, interviews and podcasts posted to the site. Go to **CCMmagazine.com** and register today (at "Music News" on the top right-hand corner of the homepage).*

>> hard at work on columbia records debut; release date TBA • up and running: everyday sunday sees radio succes

APRIL

7

Casting Crowns—**Arlington, Texas**
Nominated for numerous Dove Awards, the reigning "Group of the Year" recently celebrated a second Platinum record (***Lifesong***) and a sixth consecutive No. 1 single ("Praise You in This Storm").

1

Stellar Kart—**Irvine, Calif.**
Nominated for "Song of the Year," Stellar Kart's "Me And Jesus" brought this "Artist of the Year" nominee to the forefront last year. Check out the Dove-nominated album, ***We Can't Stand Sitting Down*** (Word) to hear more of where this No. 1 hit came from.

12

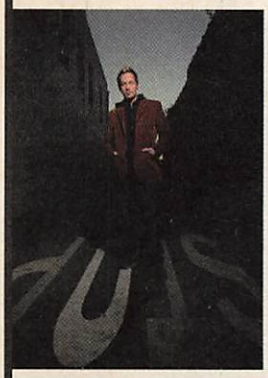
The Crabb Family—**Steelville, Mo.**
Big contenders for multiple awards, The Crabb Family is celebrating the legacy its leaving behind, this being the last year it will be touring collectively. The Crabb Family's latest project is called ***Blur The Lines*** (Daywind).

14

Jars of Clay—**Boston, Mass.**
Jars of Clay returns to the front of the pack with six nods in various categories. Currently, the band can be found touring the country in support of its Dove-nominated ***Good Monsters*** (Essential) project with special guests **NEEDTOBREATHE** and **Burlap to Cashmere**.

25

38th Annual GMA Dove Awards—**Nashville, Tenn.**
See all of these "Artist of the Year" nominees (among others) live at the Grand Ole Opry House. The 38th Annual Dove Awards will be broadcast in national syndication in May. Check your local listings for dates and times.



27

tobyMac—**Norfolk, Va.**
Long before tobyMac's breakout album, ***Portable Sounds*** (ForeFront), hit stores in February, the growing fervor over his work and lifestyle landed him in this prestigious "Artist of the Year" category. Currently, Toby is touring in support of his smash hit record with **Thousand Foot Krutch**, **Building 429** and **Family Force 5**.

30

Third Day—**Miami, Fla.**
Third Day sets sail this day from Miami on the "Music Boat Cruise" with friends and fellow Dove Award nominees **Bebo Norman**, **Aaron Shust**, **BarlowGirl** and **Kutless**, among others, as the "Year of Third Day" continues. The first of the band's two milestone projects releasing this year, ***Chronology, Volume One (1996-2000)*** (Essential), is reviewed in this month's issue (see P. 98 of "InReview Music").

Birthdays

5—Chrissy Conway, Phil Wickham
7—John Cooper *(Skillet)*, Steven Kanika *(Dalton)*, Mark Kibble *(Take 6)*, Michael Neagle *(Monk & Neagle)*
9—Ben Davis *(By the Tree)*
10—Justin Cox *(Fireflight)*, AJ Michalka *(Aly & AJ)*
13—Dave May *(The Longing)*, Josh Schwartz *(Seventh Day Slumber)*
15—Ben Kasica *(Skillet)*
16—Michael Farren *(Pocket Full of Rocks)*
17—Alisa Girard
18—Leigh Cappillino *(Point of Grace)*, Noah Henson *(Pillar)*
19—Christine Denté
20—Glenn Drennen *(Fireflight)*
21—Brian Meek *(Jackson Waters)*, Chris Wright *(Cross Culture)*
22—Ginny Owens
24—Dan Harrass *(Cross Culture)*, Jasen Rauch *(Red)*
25— Justin Abilla *(Olivia the Band)*
26—Steven Bush *(SPUR58)*, Danielle Young *(Caedmon's Call)*
27—Jordan Messer *(Stellar Kart)*
28—Lester Estelle *(Pillar)*

ith debut singles "Find Me Tonight" and "Wake Up! Wake Up!" breaking Top 30 first week out setting >>>

THE TOP-SELLING CHRISTIAN ALBUMS ACCORDING TO NIELSEN SOUNDSCAN

[Highest Debut::::::::TOBYMAC]

Portable Sounds (ForeFront)

[tobyMac's *Portable Sounds* also debuted at No. 10 on the *Billboard 200* sales chart. In Toby's best sales week ever as a solo artist, *Portable Sounds* moved more than 50,500 copies.]

[TOP CHRISTIAN/GOSPEL ALBUMS OVERALL]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WEEKS ON CHT	ARTIST	TITLE (Label)
1	—	1	TOBYMAC	*Portable Sounds* (Forefront)
2	—	1	ANBERLIN	*Cities* (Tooth & Nail)
3	1	4	VARIOUS	*WOW Gospel 2007* (Verity)
4	2	9	SELAH	*Hiding Place* (Curb)
5	3	21	VARIOUS	*WOW Hits 2007* (Sparrow/EMI)
6	—	1	EVERLIFE	*Everlife* (Hollywood/Buena Vista)
7	4	52	ALAN JACKSON	*Precious Memories* (ACR/Arista Nashville)
8	9	72	FLYLEAF	*Flyleaf* (Octone/S-R-E)
9	10	26	VARIOUS	*Three Wooden Crosses* (Word)
10	7	22	CHRIS TOMLIN	*See the Morning* (sixsteps)
11	22	14	PATTI LABELLE	*The Gospel According to Patti LaBelle* (Bungalo)
12	8	73	KIRK FRANKLIN	*Hero* (Gospo Centric)
13	11	45	MAT KEARNEY	*Nothing Left to Lose* (Columbia/Inpop)
14	6	9	SWITCHFOOT	*Oh! Gravity.* (Columbia/Sparrow)
15	—	1	THE SHOWDOWN	*Temptation Come My Way* (Mono vs. Stereo)
16	5	78	CASTING CROWNS	*Lifesong* (Beach Street)
17	16	40	TYE TRIBBETT	*Victory* (Integrity)
18	13	8	TOBYMAC	*Momentum* (Forefront)
19	21	16	KIRK FRANKLIN	*Songs for the Storm, Vol. 1* (Gospo Centric)
20	18	21	SKILLET	*Comatose* (Ardent/S-R-E/Lava/Atlantic)
21	14	17	JEREMY CAMP	*Beyond Measure* (BEC)
22	15	17	NEWSBOYS	*Go* (Inpop)
23	20	5	ERNIE HAASE & SIGNATURE SOUND	*Get Away Jordan* (Springhouse)
24	25	21	FRED HAMMOND	*Free to Worship* (Verity)
25	40	5	VARIOUS	*Amazing Grace: Music Inspired by the Motion Picture* (Sparrow)
26	24	18	KELLY PRICE	*This Is Who I Am* (Gospo Centric)
27	12	44	MERCYME	*Coming Up to Breathe* (INO)
28	29	84	MARY MARY	*Mary Mary* (Columbia/Integrity)
29	—	87	VARIOUS	*I Can Only Imagine* (INO)
30	27	14	P.O.D.	*Greatest Hits (The Atlantic Years)* (Atlantic)
31	23	88	CHRIS TOMLIN	*Arriving* (sixsteps)
32	17	22	MARK SCHULTZ	*Broken & Beautiful* (Word)
33	32	22	JUANITA BYNUM & JONATHAN BUTLER	*Gospel Goes Classical* (MARA)
34	31	59	JUANITA BYNUM	*Piece of My Passion* (FLOW)
35	30	47	VARIOUS	*WOW Worship: Aqua* (Provident)
36	28	23	JONNY LANG	*Turn Around* (A&M)
37	26	21	SMOKIE NORFUL	*Life Changing* (EMI Gospel)
38	42	68	VARIOUS	*Open the Eyes of My Heart* (INO)
39	34	88	CASTING CROWNS	*Casting Crowns* (Beach Street)
40	37	88	MERCYME	*Almost There* (INO)

*Each chart reflects Christian and general market combined album sales for the week ending ***February 25, 2007.*** All charts © 2007 by Nielsen SoundScan (a division of VNU Marketing Information) and Christian Music Trade Association. All rights reserved. No reproduction without permission.

>>*HitLists cont. on Page 16*

> stage for album release may 22 • how sweet the sound: chris tomlin's version of "amazing grace (my chains >>>

MUSIC YOU BELIEVE

DAYWIND

Top Contemporary Tracks

Song Title	Made Popular By
Glory	Selah & Nichole Nordeman
Broken And Beautiful	Mark Schultz
Prodigal	Casting Crowns
Made To Worship	Chris Tomlin
Praise You In This Storm	Casting Crowns
We Shall Behold Him	Sandi Patty
Breakfast Table	Chris Rice
Mercy In Me	Todd Agnew
Anchor Holds	Ray Boltz
Through It All	Selah
Wonderful Merciful Saviour	Selah
Because Of Who You Are	Jacobs & Bynum
Real Me	Natalie Grant
Thank You	Ray Boltz
You Raise Me Up	Selah
Redeemer	Nicole C Mullen
Say The Name	Martha Munizzi
Grace Like Rain	Todd Agnew
Your Grace Still Amazes	Phillips
Find Your Wings	Mark Harris

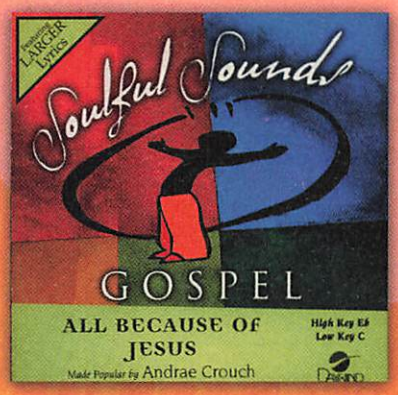
Top Praise & Worship Tracks

Song Title	Made Popular By
Made To Worship	Chris Tomlin
Pray For Rain	Binions
In Christ Alone	Natalie Grant
I Can Only Imagine	Mercy Me
Say The Name	Martha Munizzi
Praise His Name	Sheri Easter
My Savior My God	Aaron Shust
Lord, You're Holy	Karen Wheaton
Days Of Elijah	Revival In Belfast
He Reigns	Kirk Franklin

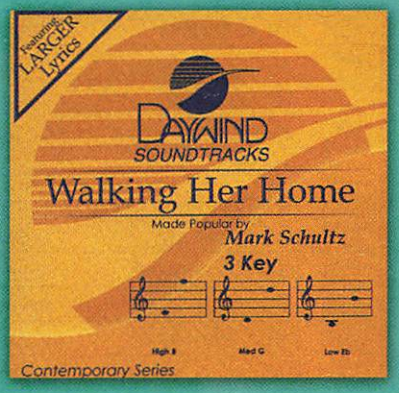
Top Country Tracks

Song Title	Made Popular By
I Loved Her First	Heartland
When The Sand Runs Out	Rascal Flatts
Jesus Take The Wheel	Carrie Underwood
In God We Still Trust	Diamond Rio
Perfect Love	McRaes
When I Get Where I'm Going	Brad Paisley & Dolly Parton
Long Black Train	Josh Turner
Bless The Broken Road	Rascal Flatts
Believe	Brooks & Dunn
Me And God	Josh Turner & Ralph Stanley

PERFECT LOVE
Made popular by The McRaes



ALL BECAUSE OF JESUS
Made popular by Andrae Crouch



WALKING HER HOME
Made popular by Mark Schultz

DAYWIND SOUNDTRACKS

Available at your local Christian bookstore. For a complete soundtrack listing, visit www.daywind.com.

>>cont. from Page 14

[TOP ROCK/ALTERNATIVE ALBUMS]

THIS WEEK	WEEKS ON CHT	ARTIST	TITLE (Label)
1	2	TOBYMAC	*Portable Sounds* (ForeFront)
2	2	ANBERLIN	*Cities* (Tooth & Nail)
3	72	FLYLEAF	*Flyleaf* (Octone/S-R-E)
4	2	SWITCHFOOT	*Oh! Gravity.* (Columbia/Sparrow)
5	1	THE SHOWDOWN	*Temptation Come My Way* (Mono vs. Stereo)
6	12	TOBYMAC	*Momentum* (Forefront)
7	21	SKILLET	*Comatose* (Ardent/S-R-E/Lava/Atlantic)
8	14	P.O.D.	*Greatest Hits (The Atlantic Years)* (Atlantic)
9	23	JONNY LANG	*Turn Around* (A&M)
10	69	THIRD DAY	*Wherever You Are* (Essential)
11	38	RED	*End of Silence* (Essential)
12	36	UNDEROATH	*Define the Great Line* (Tooth & Nail)
13	74	BARLOWGIRL	*Another Journal Entry* (Fervent)
14	22	PILLAR	*The Reckoning* (Flicker)
15	47	HAWK NELSON	*Smile, It's the End of the World* (Tooth & Nail)
16	30	AUDIO ADRENALINE	*Adios: The Greatest Hits* (Forefront)
17	28	LEELAND	*Sound of Melodies* (Essential)
18	104	KUTLESS	*Strong Tower* (BEC)
19	16	DISCIPLE	*Scars Remain* (S/R/E)
20	47	SANCTUS REAL	*The Face of Love* (Sparrow)

[TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS]

THIS WEEK	WEEKS ON CHT	ARTIST	TITLE (Label)
1	14	PATTI LABELLE	*The Gospel According to Patti LaBelle* (Bungalo)
2	88	TOBYMAC	*Welcome to Diverse City* (ForeFront)
3	29	LECRAE	*After the Music Stops* (Cross Movement)
4	20	LATTIMORE/MOORE	*Uncovered* (La Face)
5	21	VARIOUS	*Body + Soul Gospel* (TimeLife)
6	14	GRITS	*Redemption* (Gotee)
7	77	CECE WINANS	*Purified* (Pure Springs Gospel/INO)
8	9	SOUL P.	*The Premiere* (Beatmart)
9	26	NIYOKI	*My Everything* (Direct 2 God)
10	32	21:03	*Twenty One 0 Three* (Verity)
11	28	VARIOUS	*Hip Hope Hits 2007* (Gotee)
12	31	TRIP LEE	*If They Only Knew* (Rech)
13	88	RUBEN STUDDARD	*I Need an Angel* (J Records)
14	43	KJ-52	*KJ-52 Remixed* (BEC)
15	75	DA T.R.U.T.H.	*The Faith* (Cross Movement)
16	48	GRITS	*7* (Gotee)
17	19	VARIOUS	*Holy Hip-Hop, Vol. 4* (EMI CMG)
18	88	KJ-52	*Behind the Musik* (BEC)
19	18	TEDASHII	*Kingdom People* (Rech)
20	88	DEITRICK HADDON	*Lost and Found* (Verity)

[TOP ADULT CONTEMPORARY/POP ALBUMS]

THIS WEEK	WEEKS ON CHT	ARTIST	TITLE (Label)
1	21	VARIOUS	*WOW Hits 2007* (Sparrow/EMI)
2	1	EVERLIFE	*Everlife* (Hollywood/Buena Vista)
3	45	MAT KEARNEY	*Nothing Left to Lose* (Columbia/Inpop)
4	79	CASTING CROWNS	*Lifesong* (Beach Street)
5	17	JEREMY CAMP	*Beyond Measure* (BEC)
6	17	NEWSBOYS	*Go* (Inpop)
7	5	VARIOUS	*Amazing Grace: Music Inspired by the Motion Picture* (Sparrow)
8	44	MERCYME	*Coming Up to Breathe* (INO)
9	22	MARK SCHULTZ	*Broken & Beautiful* (Word)
10	178	CASTING CROWNS	*Casting Crowns* (Beach Street)
11	105	MERCYME	*Almost There* (INO)
12	29	JONAS BROTHERS	*It's About Time* (INO)
13	16	MICHAEL W. SMITH	*Stand* (Reunion)
14	29	SELAH	*Bless the Broken Road: The Duets* (Curb)
15	21	CASTING CROWNS	*Lifesong Live* (Beach Street)
16	1	GROUP 1 CREW	*Group 1 Crew* (Fervent)
17	10	NICOLE C. MULLEN	*Redeemer: The Best of Nicole C. Mullen* (Word)
18	4	ECHOING ANGELS	*You Alone* (INO)
19	25	JARS OF CLAY	*Good Monsters* (Essential)
20	99	VARIOUS	*WOW #1's* (Provident)

[TOP PRAISE & WORSHIP ALBUMS]

THIS WEEK	WEEKS ON CHT	ARTIST	TITLE (Label)
1	20	CHRIS TOMLIN	*See the Morning* (sixsteps)
2	127	CHRIS TOMLIN	*Arriving* (sixsteps)
3	47	VARIOUS	*WOW Worship: Aqua* (Provident)
4	70	VARIOUS	*Open the Eyes of My Heart* (INO)
5	7	MATT REDMAN	*Beautiful News* (sixsteps)
6	9	PASSION BAND	*The Best of Passion (So Far)* (sixsteps)
7	16	VARIOUS	*iWorship Platinum* (Integrity)
8	25	HILLSONG	*Mighty to Save* (Integrity)
9	57	AARON SHUST	*Anything Worth Saying* (Brash/Word)
10	47	UNITED	*United We Stand* (Integrity)
11	2	PASSION BAND	*Passion: Live From Passion 07* (sixsteps)
12	285	MICHAEL W. SMITH	*Worship* (Reunion)
13	16	LINCOLN BREWSTER	*Let the Praises Ring* (Integrity)
14	70	RANDY TRAVIS	*Glory Train: Songs of Worship* (Word)
15	51	VARIOUS	*Best Worship Songs Ever!* (WTG)
16	74	DAVID CROWDER BAND	*A Collision* (sixsteps)
17	37	VARIOUS	*Very Best of Praise & Worship* (Verity)
18	38	VARIOUS	*Top 25 Praise Songs, 2007 Edition* (MARA)
19	300	VARIOUS	*Songs 4 Worship: Shout to the Lord* (Integrity)
20	61	HILLSONG	*Ultimate Worship: Best of Hillsong* (Integrity)

*Each chart reflects Christian and general market combined album sales for the week ending ***February 25, 2007.*** All charts © 2007 by Nielsen SoundScan (a division of VNU Marketing Information) and Christian Music Trade Association. All rights reserved. No reproduction without permission.

>> are gone)" used as part of "Amazing Grace Sunday" in February; over 5,000 American churches from all 50

GLORY REVEALED

Live in Concert!

ARTISTS UNITED FOR ONE PASSION:
A CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP AND THE WORD

MAC POWELL

DAVID NASSER

SHANE & SHANE

BRIAN LITTRELL

CANDI PEARSON SHELTON

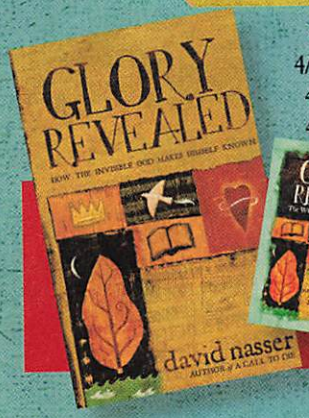
TIM NEUFELD FROM STARFIELD

SHAWN LEWIS

TREVOR MORGAN

FEATURING: MAC POWELL, DAVID NASSER, SHANE & SHANE, BRIAN LITTRELL, TIM NEUFELD AND FRIENDS

4/9 - Frederick, MD
4/10 - Woodbridge, VA
4/11 - Lexington, KY
4/12 - Waukesha, WI
4/13 - St. Paul, MN
4/14 - Duluth, MN
4/15 - Alexandria, MN
4/18- Tuscaloosa, AL
4/19 Knoxville, TN
4/20 - Chattanooga, TN
4/21 - Pensacola, FL
4/22 - Birmingham, AL
4/26 - Ocala, FL
4/27 - Lakeland, FL
4/28 - Clearwater, FL
4/29 - Atlanta, GA
*all dates subject to change



In Stores Now!

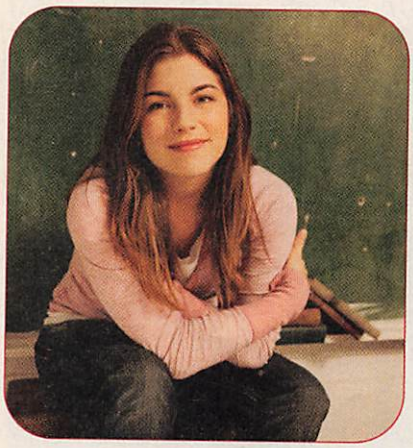
Also available *Glory Revealed: The Book & Worship CD*
CD features the hit "By His Wounds" sung by Mac Powell (Third Day), Steven Curtis Chapman, Brian Littrell & Mark Hall (Casting Crowns).

www.gloryrevealed.com www.davidnasser.com

GLORYREVEALED.COM

sightings

— by Chris Well



WRITE FROM THE HEART

In honor of her April release *Waking Up* (Sparrow), singer/songwriter **Bethany Dillon** and **myCCM.org** are partnering for a special essay contest! Here's the deal: Between April 2 and May 1, write a 500-800 word essay describing a time when God spiritually woke you up to something new to your life. The winner will see his or her essay posted on **myCCM.org**—and will get to personally interview Bethany Dillon for a future issue of *CCM Magazine*! Prizes also include CDs, gift cards and *CCM* subscriptions. Click on over RIGHT NOW for the details and rules at **myCCM.org**. (While you're there, check out Bethany's myCCM profile at **myCCM.org/BethanyDillon**.)

ON THE TUBE

On her official site, **Krystal Meyers** says NBC is continuing to use her song "Together" for promotional purposes throughout 2007. Last fall, the network had already used the song to promote the hit series "Heroes." Now NBC plans to include the song in several DVD releases of their hit primetime shows, hitting stores between September and December of 2007. In addition, Krystal's song will remain a feature on NBC's music website for the rest of the year.

Meanwhile, the CBS series "Jericho" recently came back from hiatus—and featured **Mat Kearney's** "Nothing Left to Lose."

WHAT IF GHOST RIDER GOT SAVED?

Critics are divided on whether you should see the film ***Ghost Rider***—based on the Marvel comic book about a stunt motorcycle rider named Johnny Blaze who makes a deal with the devil (and becomes a superhero). Whatever you think of the movie (we didn't see it), we just wonder how things might have turned out if comic book writer Tony Isabella got his way.

In the May 2007 issue of trade pub *Comics Buyers Guide*, Isabella shares at length about his time as a writer for the comic in the mid-1970s—during which he planned something that would have changed the concept entirely: "I'd written a story wherein, couched in mildly subtle terms, Blaze accepted Jesus as his Savior and freed himself from Satan's power forever."

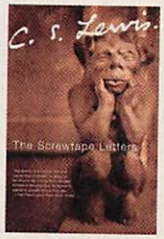
According to Isabella's account, the story arc took two years to unfold, and was approved by several editors. But when the story reached the big twist—and a certain mysterious drifter was going to be revealed as Jesus Christ—an assistant editor "took offense" and intercepted the book right as it was about to go to the printer and completely rewrote the story. "To this day," Isabella writes, "I consider what he did to my story one of the three most arrogant and wrong-headed actions I've ever seen from an editor."

So now you know.

OUR MAN WINTER

Producer Ralph Winter's adaptation of Ted Dekker's thriller ***Thr3e***, following a run in theaters, is headed to DVD on April 24. The adaptation of *House*, based on the novel by Dekker and Frank Peretti, is in post-production and will probably hit theaters in the fall.

Winter certainly keeps busy—his latest blockbuster, ***Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer***, hits theaters in June. He and Walden Media have also announced plans to take the C.S. Lewis classic ***The Screwtape Letters*** to the silver screen as a live-action film. Headed to theaters in 2008, *Screwtape Letters* is Walden's second Lewis adaptation, following the blockbuster *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. The second "Chronicles" movie, ***Prince Caspian***, is also due next year.



NOBODIES NO MORE

The Feb. 16 issue of *Entertainment Weekly* did a nice spotlight on **The Fray**, sharing the band's rise from obscurity to being the new "it" band—thanks in part to the hits "How to Save a Life" and "Over My Head (Cable Car)," plus a boost from ABC's hit medical drama "Grey's Anatomy."

"We all grew up, for the most part, sheltered Christian boys in the suburbs," drummer Ben Wysocki told *EW*.

By the way, The Fray's debut album, *How to Save a Life*, has gone Double Platinum, selling more than two million copies. The album was also the biggest-selling album of 2006 on the iTunes Store and recently became the best-selling digital album of all time—passing Coldplay's *X&Y*.

BACK TO THE JUNGLE

Filming for ***Rambo IV: Pearl of the Cobra*** began in Thailand this past February. According to star Sylvester Stallone, the title character comes out of retirement to rescue a group of missionaries in Burma.

Keep up with the latest "SIGHTINGS" weekdays at *myccm.org/ChrisWell/blog*.

>> States and 10 provinces sang "Amazing Grace" and held prayer for the end of slavery • Men at work: Credent

Chris Well's GLUTEN-FREE *CCM* List-O-Rama

* A compendium of arguably useless and "researched" musings

END OF THE LINE:

5 Artists Singin' About The Return of Jesus

From its early beginnings as an offshoot of the 1960s protest music, contemporary Christian music has long had a tradition of exploring the mysteries of the Second Coming of Jesus. From Larry Norman's modern hymn "I Wish We'd All Been Ready" to the Daniel Amos rock opera *Shotgun Angel* to a whole slew of apocalyptic pop from DeGarmo & Key, it's been a regular topic for Christian songwriters. Which, of course, would make this list too easy—so we went with mainstream artists.

NOTE: *No, this is not yet another excuse to tell you about my brand-spranking-new end-times(ish) comedy thriller* **Tribulation House** *(Harvest House), hitting bookshelves in May. Because that's not what I'm about.*

1. U2, "Tomorrow"

On the band's sophomore release, the 1981 album *October* (Island)—ranked as No. 41 on *CCM Magazine*'s 2001 list of the greatest Christian music albums of all time—the boys were starting to express their faith on record. The track "Tomorrow" was written in honor of Bono's mother, who died when he was young. The song ends with joy in the hope that boy and mother will be reunited—and the proclamation *"He's coming back/I believe it/Jesus's coming."*

2. COLLIN RAYE, "What If Jesus Comes Back Like That"

This brilliant challenge to "consider the least of these" ties in with Christmas, Easter *and* the Second Coming: *"What if Jesus comes back like that?/Will He cry when He sees where our hearts are at?/Will He let us in or turn His back?"* The single went to No. 21 on the country charts. You can find it on the Platinum-selling 1996 album *I Think About You* (Sony) and the retrospective *Direct Hits*.

3. BOB DYLAN, "Slow Train Coming"

This song, explaining the inevitability of God's judgment, comes from 1979's *Slow Train Coming* (Columbia). The first salvo from what many rock critics' call Bob Dylan's "Christian period," the album was No. 16 on *CCM*'s aforementioned list of greatest Christian albums. In October 1979, Dylan appeared as a musical guest on "Saturday Night Live" (his only appearance to date), performing three tracks from the album, "Gotta Serve Somebody," "I Believe In You" and "When You Gonna Wake Up."

4. CLIFF RICHARD, "Thief in the Night"

The first rock star to be knighted—ahead of even Paul McCartney and Elton John—Sir Cliff Richard has sold a stunning 250 million albums worldwide. With hits going all the way back to the 1950s, Richard and Elvis Presley are the only two acts to make the U.K. singles charts in each of six decades (1950s-2000s). On his 1982 album, *Now You See Me...Now You Don't* (EMI), Sir Cliff included the overtly Christian warning "Thief in the Night," which point-blank told British pop fans about the return of Christ.

5. JOHNNY CASH, "The Man Comes Around"

The final album released in his lifetime, 2002's *American IV: The Man Comes Around* (American) was a big hit for Cash—it was his first record to sell Gold in 30 years, and garnered a slew of awards. For a record with such general market acclaim, the title track is shockingly dead-on, finding Cash in full angry-prophet mode spelling out the book of Revelation: *"And I heard, as it were, the noise of thunder: One of the four beasts saying: 'Come and see.' And I saw ... "* An early take on the song is found on the 2003 posthumous box set *Unearthed, The Legend of Johnny Cash*.

***Chris Well**'s latest novel,* **Tribulation House** *(Harvest House), hits stores in May. A man thinks he knows the day and hour of Jesus' return and feels safe borrowing money from the mob. But when Jesus fails to show up on schedule...*

REJECTED

DOVE AWARD CATEGORIES

[1] "Band We Most Wish Would Break Up"
[2] "Best Imitation of a Secular Band"
[3] "Most Ambiguous Lyrics"

WAYS TO GET ENGAGED

BY THE END OF SEMESTER

[1] Tell that guy or girl, "God told me to marry you...What's your name again?"
[2] Make a Christian music mix CD. (Be sure to include "Kiss Me." Chicks dig that stuff.)
[3] Don't call her a "chick." Seriously.

ecordings band Dizmas working on new album titled Tension, streets May 22 • The Cross movement puts >>

Welcome to the world of independent artists.

Three Cord Wonder

The Jesus Rock Show

Love punk music? Three Cord Wonder, a band from Denver, Colorado might be just what you are looking for. With the release of its follow-up album, *The Jesus Rock Show*, Three Cord Wonder brings to the table singable melodies that echo the best of punk and pop rock. Check out **threecordwonder.com** for tour dates and to purchase the album.

The Mike Duncan Project

Hope for Tomorrow

After spiraling down into a life of emptiness, Mike Duncan turned to Jesus in 1996. Always having been a musician, Mike wanted to use the songs he had written in his transformation to bless others. The Mike Duncan Project—his band—came together as other Pittsburgh area musicians helped him make his dream a reality, giving way to a full-length album of warm piano parts and gripping songs. Don't miss out on *Hope for Tomorrow*, and visit **mikeduncanproject.com** for more info.

Josh Wood

Words

Got soul? Josh Wood does! This Nashville-based singer/songwriter recently released his debut album, *Words*, a collection of 13 original songs that will make you tap your toes and want to roll your windows down in the car. Wood takes inspiration from the likes of Stevie Wonder and Mark Broussard, but puts his own unique personality and style into each track. You can purchase the record at **awarestore.com**. Check out **myspace.com/joshwood** to sample his music.

Javen

Believer

Formerly signed to Word, Javen has been pursuing independent projects for several years with great success. Featured on VH1, BET and TBN, Javen is now spreading the gospel alongside Denzel Washington, Kirk Franklin and many others by participating in *The Bible Experience* (a 70-hour long dramatic audio production covering Genesis through Revelation). Javen's latest album, *Believer*, is a soulful worship experience you can check out at his website, **javenonline.com**.

Profiles by KATE McDONALD

READY AND WILLING

By: Margaret Becker

The first time Jim showed up at my door, he was wearing a Frank Sinatra hat, a long overcoat with a matching scarf, and carrying a briefcase. "So what?" you say. Well, Jim's my handyman.

I knew then that he was different from other freelance fix-it's I'd hired. Everything about him said dignity, honesty and stability. All that and firmly belted jeans—a dream repairman. I've been using him for years now.

Jim lives lightly here in Tennessee. In his mid-forties, he finds "stuff" cumbersome. He lives in a tiny trailer (approximately 125' of living space) with very little except his tools. The trailer is a camper, so he "resides" everywhere and nowhere, with a standing long-term winter gig as a caretaker in a lakefront park.

I asked him once if he missed being "on-the-grid," with the rest of us who live in places with actual foundations. His answer was emphatic. "Never. I park my house where I want. I light a fire, sit in my folding chair and watch the sun go down almost every night. I need next to nothing to live. Best way for me to describe it is, I am free."

In early September 2005, he showed up at my house to say goodbye. He had somewhere he had to be. He was in a different car, a 1979 Chevy Carryall. In the back were all his tools. My first thought was entirely selfish, and had to do with visions of me trying to find someone who would be willing to fix, haul and maintain. My next thought was for him though, because, by the looks of it all, he seemed to have been offered a great gig somewhere else. Something steady and exciting, judging from the tears he quietly kept wiping away as he tried to share where he was going. Finally, he arrived at the word, "Louisiana."

"Oh, so you can get some contract work? Help rebuild after Katrina?"

"Kinda," he answered. "I feel called to hook up my trailer and drive. When I see something I can do for someone, I'm gonna stop and do it. I'm not going for pay. I'm going because I have to go. I know it's from Him."

I was at first speechless, then—as is our custom—I bantered, fighting my own tears, "Well, at least I'm not losing you to another woman."

Seems that all the details lined up. The "new" car was from his last job—payment for painting. The money to live and travel came from saving. The passion to go? That came from God. The readiness and availability? That was Jim.

It all spoke volumes to me about remaining open to prompts, about being prepared to respond, about believing for the details. And the small things as well. Jim went for the 'one.' He went for the unnoticed, unpublicized, uncompensated and very unglamorous gig—because he was obedient. He was ready. He was willing.

At a time when people barely leave their living room without a "benefit" to them on the other side of the door, Jim is a maverick, a challenge to stay lean and attuned, and available—despite "numerics" and "positioning."

I wonder what would happen if we all started to "be" and "do" accordingly? Hmm. Probably everything "Christ."

Check out Margaret's monthly podcasts online at **maggieb.com**. *Also, be sure to pick up a copy of her book,* Coming Up for Air *(Navpress), available at amazon.com and christianbook.com.*

>> finishing touches on *History*, releases June 5 • Lincoln Brewster kicked off March by notching Integrity music

A conversation with Dave Koch

industrybeat

by Jay Swartzendruber

CHARTING RADIO'S COURSE

After serving eight years as the director of broadcast production at Focus on the Family, DAVE KOCH founded Westar Media Group in 1995. In addition to his role as the company's president, Koch is the publisher/editor of Westar's two magazines. *CRW (Christian Radio & Retail Weekly)* is a publication that serves Christian music stations and the industry, while *Wireless Age* magazine is distributed quarterly to every Christian radio station in America.

Based in Colorado Springs, Colo., Westar is a full-service media agency that syndicates radio programs for Christian ministries on hundreds of stations across the U.S. The company also provides audio production, graphic design, packaging and media placement services.

Koch, a graduate of Houghton College (Houghton, N.Y.) where he first immersed himself in radio, spent his early career as a programming director and working in various on-air roles for several stations. Personally speaking, his passions are Christian radio, golf, real estate and family. Koch and his wife of 19 years, Cindy, have two children. For additional info: christianradioweekly.com.

What led you to start publishing *Christian Radio & Retail Weekly*?

Our company was already publishing *Wireless Age* when the radio trade *The CCM Update* announced its plans in early 2002 to discontinue. We received a phone call from Nashville asking if we would be interested in providing airplay charts for Christian music. We went to press literally three weeks later with a sample issue of *CRW* just in time for the 2002 GMA convention. It was well received by the industry and by Christian radio.

What are the primary ways that *CRW* serves the industry?

We provide charts in four formats for radio and retail—AC (Adult Contemporary), CHR (Contemporary Hit Radio), Inspo and Rock. *CRW* also prints articles on programming for Christian radio, news on artist releases and retail news and information.

What sets the charting system for *CRW* apart from *Billboard* and *R&R*'s charts?

CRW's chart methodology is an audience impressions chart rather than a straight spins chart. Our charts are ranked by the number of ears that are hearing a song. For example, a spin in Los Angeles puts that single in front of potentially tens of thousands of ears. Comparatively, a spin in Casper, Wyo. will have a fraction of potential listeners hearing that song. The No. 1 song on *CRW*'s charts is, therefore, being heard by the most listeners in the U.S. and is ranked accordingly. *CRW*'s chart methodology is a simple factor of using the station's AQH (Average Quarter Hour audience) times the number of spins the station plays a song in a given week. You could say that *CRW*'s chart rewards singles with spins on larger stations and networks like KLOVE, WAY-FM, Moody, etc. Also, when a station's ratings improve, so does their "weight" as it relates to movement of a single on our charts. *CRW*'s chart is a true reflection of reach.

What are the key trends you're seeing at Christian radio these days?

Some stations are playing less singles in their playlist and playing them more often. Also, research is becoming huge. Stations are focusing on listener feedback groups to determine what is and is not a hit. Christian radio is also becoming more proactive in the community—a renewed focus on localization.

We've seen Christian radio's AC, CHR and Rock formats each become more "rock" in recent years. Has that trend plateaued?

Christian formats and music trends are usually three to five years behind what blows up big at mainstream. Creed's *Human Clay* sold over 10 million records starting in 1999. Christian radio answered with Jeremy Camp, Todd Agnew, Building 429, Kutless and others, all rock oriented acts—and Creed oriented, too! It's not radio's fault. The church's taste buds are in that cycle and, at that time, that's what Christian radio listeners said they wanted. I think Rock could be making a comeback. We've seen new stations, specialty shows and syndicated Rock programs starting up, and that's a good sign.

What is currently Christian radio's fastest growing format?

AC is by far the fastest growing format. Its growth is due to several factors—a better focus from stations on the music they are programming, becoming more skillful at identifying and pleasing the target audience, making better records than in years past, the realization by mainstream clusters that AC Christian is a viable format, and a continuing trend of upward growth in the Arbitron ratings.

CRW CHRISTIAN RADIO & RETAIL WEEKLY

Top Songs

AC

TW	ARTIST *Song* (label) ALBUM
1	**CASTING CROWNS** *Does Anybody Hear Her* (Beach Street) LIFESONG
2	**LINCOLN BREWSTER** *Everlasting God* (Integrity) LET THE PRAISES RING - THE BEST OF LINCOLN BREWSTER
3	**JEREMY CAMP** *What It Means* (BEC) BEYOND MEASURE
4	**BEBO NORMAN** *I Will Lift My Eyes* (Essential/PLG) BETWEEN THE DREAMING & THE COMING TRUE
5	**MERCYME** *Hold Fast* (INO) COMING UP TO BREATHE
6	**ECHOING ANGELS** *You Alone* (INO) YOU ALONE
7	**TOBYMAC** *Made To Love* (Forefront) PORTABLE SOUNDS
8	**MARK SCHULTZ** *Walking Her Home* (Word-Curb) BROKEN & BEAUTIFUL
9	**RUSH OF FOOLS** *Undo* (Midas) RUSH OF FOOLS
10	**MARK HARRIS** *Wish You Were Here* (INO) THE LINE BETWEEN THE TWO

CHR

TW	ARTIST *Song* (label) ALBUM
1	**TOBYMAC** *Made to Love* (ForeFront) PORTABLE SOUNDS
2	**RELIENT K** *Forgiven* (Gotee) FIVE SCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO
3	**STARFIELD** *Everything is Beautiful* (Sparrow/EMI) BEAUTY IN THE BROKEN
4	**JEREMY CAMP** *Tonight* (BEC) BEYOND MEASURE
5	**SANCTUS REAL** *Don't Give Up* (Sparrow/EMI) THE FACE OF LOVE
6	**STELLAR KART** *Hold On* (Word-Curb) WE CAN'T STAND SITTING DOWN
7	**SUPERCHICK** *Stand In The Rain* (Inpop) BEAUTY FROM PAIN
8	**THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH** *Breathe You In* (Tooth & Nail) THE ART OF BREAKING
9	**AARON SHUST** *Give It All Away* (Brash) ANYTHING WORTH SAYING
10	**JARS OF CLAY** *Work* (Essential) GOOD MONSTERS

Rock

TW	ARTIST *Song* (label) ALBUM
1	**FALLING UP** *Searchlights* (Tooth & Nail) EXIT LIGHTS
2	**DECYFER DOWN** *No Longer* (S/R/E) END OF GREY
3	**THE CLASSIC CRIME** *The Fight* (Tooth & Nail) ALBATROSS
4	**NEVERTHELESS** *Live Like We're Alive* (Flicker) LIVE LIKE WE'RE ALIVE
5	**STELLAR KART** *Procrastinating* (Word-Curb) WE CAN'T STAND SITTING DOWN
6	**RELIENT K** *Forgiven* (Gotee) FIVE SCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO
7	**PILLAR** *When Tomorrow Comes* (Flicker) THE RECKONING
8	**FIREFLIGHT** *Waiting* (Flicker) THE HEALING OF HARMS
9	**SWITCHFOOT** *Oh! Gravity.* (Sparrow/EMI) OH! GRAVITY.
10	**P.O.D.** *Going In Blind* (Atlantic) P.O.D. GREATEST HITS: THE ATLANTIC YEARS

Each chart reflects Christian radio airplay for the week ending **March 2, 2007** as tabulated by *Christian Radio & Retail Weekly*.
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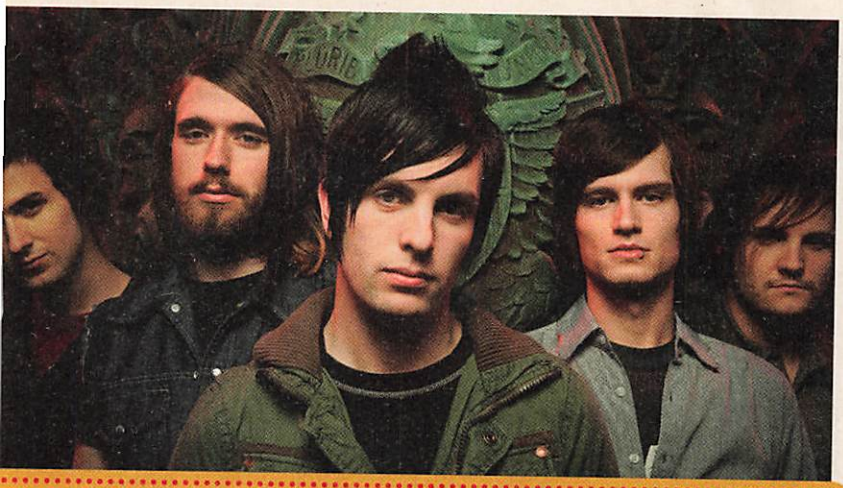
Look for CRW airplay charts to appear in CCM's "Hitlists" section beginning next month.

st ever top 10 christian ac single via new hit "everlasting god" which was no. 2 at press time •

paulcolman's onestowatch



This Beautiful Republic
SAVE THE BAND, SAVE THE WORLD

THIS BEAUTIFUL REPUBLIC from Toledo, Ohio, sounds as big as its name suggests it should! Comprised of Ben Olin (lead vocals), Adam Smith (guitar), Andrew Smith (drums), Brandon Paxton (bass) and Jeremy Kunkle (guitar), the band has a big sound with big songs. This Beautiful Republic signed to Forefront Records last fall; and its debut recording, **Even Heroes Need a Parachute**, releases worldwide on April 3. "Jesus to the World" is the band's first single. To hear this very cool song and enter the world of This Beautiful Republic, visit **myspace.com/thisbeautifulrepublic**.

PAUL: ***There seems to be quite a buzz about This Beautiful Republic. How does that make you feel?***
BEN: Is there? Seriously, it makes us feel really great that people are receiving our music so well. There are so many tremendous bands out right now. I guess we're just really excited to see what happens in the next six months.

PAUL: ***Love the name! Can you tell us a bit about it?***
BEN: Sure! This Beautiful Republic is our way of describing the Kingdom of God. The name reminds us that we're all equals in the body of Christ, and that as equals we're working toward common goals. When we work together, we see incredible results.

PAUL: ***: Give us a sentence that describes the sound of TBR.***
BEN: Simply put, we think it sounds like Silverchair rubbing shoulders with Jimmy Eat World.

PAUL: ***How does the band write music?***
ADAM: Our songwriting process is very inclusive. We really value everyone's input, and we don't have one primary songwriter. The birth of each song is different. Sometimes we start with a melody or lyrical phrase, and, other times, we have music all ready to go, so we add melody and lyrics. It changes with each song.

ARTICLE ONE is an exciting, young, three-piece act from Canada. Brothers Matt (violin, mandolin, vocals) and Nathan Piché (vocals, guitars, piano, bass) and Dave De Smit (drums, vocals) signed to Inpop Records after label president Dale Bray found the band on MySpace. Article One has really powerful and catchy songs and a unique sound that features Matt's thrilling, world-class violin playing. To find out more about the band's soon-to-release self-titled debut, check out **articleonemusic.com**.

PAUL: ***Cool band name! How did you guys come up with it?***
MATT: For two years, we had been calling ourselves Appertain Display, which is probably the worst band name ever. We were tired of people getting confused and calling us Aspartame Display and having to explain what the name meant. We decided to come up with a new name, one that sounded cool and stood for something good. Shortly thereafter, we attended a U2 show, and they listed off the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article One stated, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood." We thought that was pretty cool and decided to use it.

PAUL: ***Describe your sound for those people who have not yet heard of you.***
MATT: We like to say we have a pop/rock sound that is unique because of Matt's violin and our three-part harmonies. It's really accessible, and I really believe we're doing something different. As always, the best way to find out is to buy the album (laughs).

PAUL: ***How did you come to be full-time musicians?***
MATT: For close to three years, we were in school and recording/performing with the band. As things grew busier, we eventually had to go full-time with music to keep up with our touring schedule. Since we were at school for music, most people were very supportive.

PAUL: ***What's an Article One show like?***
MATT: Our shows are high-energy and lots of fun. Matt always does crazy violin solos—oftentimes behind his back—and we always try to get everyone involved. Most nights we break things down and do a song or two acoustically, and we often close the night with a few worship songs.

Article One
ALL THAT THEY CAN'T LEAVE BEHIND

Singer/songwriter/author Paul Colman, the former front man of GRAMMY® nominated and Dove Award-winning act Paul Colman Trio, is also the newsboys' guitarist. Paul's latest album is **Let It Go** (Inpop) and the newsboys' latest is **Go** (Inpop). Paul currently tours, speaks and performs internationally. For more information, visit **paulcolman.com**.

INDIE COMMUNITY.com

the resource for local christian bands, worship leaders and speakers.

check out these featured artists ...

KNAPSACKHEROES! are the best in newwave/ pop/ progressive/ hip-hop music. While sometimes compared to The Killers, Gorillaz & Mute Math they bring a genre bending mixture all their own. Dust off your paten dance shoes and prepare to praise, cause the K! Is coming to your town!
WWW.KNAPSACKHEROES.COM
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Braver by the 2nd and their guitar driven anthems evoke a feeling of happiness we all have been trying re-live ever since we were kids. If you have ever been denied or judged, not on the basis of love, they fight for you. Braver by the 2 nd proudly lay it all at His feet every time they play and won't stop until their message of hope and joy is felt by the masses."
WWW.MYSPACE.COM/BRAVERBYTHE2ND

Authentic, ardent, and inspiring, this modern rock quintet from Kentucky delivers their message of hope and love from a fresh and unique perspective. Look for Live Fish on the Rock & Roll Revolution Tour in the spring/summer of 2007.
WWW.LIVEFISHBAND.COM
WWW.MYSPACE.COM/LIVEFISHBAND

"5/5 Stars... Sholty is all heart..." -Christian Music Guide
"5/5 Stars...'One Breath at a Time' will be a breath of fresh air for you..." - Chicago Music Guide
WWW.JADESHOLTY.COM
WWW.MYSPACE.COM/JADESHOLTY

Station2 is a two man acoustic rock loop band that desires to show the genuineness of their faith through their music. They play various venues, secular and Christian in an attempt to share the hope they have found in Christ. They strongly believe in the local church and desire to help the body of Christ reach out to its community.
WWW.STATION2MUSIC.COM
WWW.MYSPACE.COM/STATION2MUSIC

Their message of LOVE comes through loud and clear on their debut CD "Homeward Bound". Their ministry speaks to all those who are searching hurting and looking for hope in this world. They proclaim a simple message that says: They are no different than anyone else, they are not special in anyway, and they are just like YOU. Which in conclusion makes them...Among The Thirsty.
WWW.AMONGTHETHIRSTY.COM
WWW.MYSPACE.COM/AMONGTHETHIRSTY

Another intriguing Texas worship band. Is it something in the water down there? Debut release "Inside Out" will make you stand up, take notice and beg for more... Ben Richter Band is one to watch closely, and I'm already looking forward to their next offering.
-Kevan Breitinger - Christian Music Suite101.com
WWW.BENRICHTERBAND.COM
WWW.MYSPACE.COM/BENRICHTERBAND

SERAPH has been touring the South East for three years. With musical roots in rock, bluegrass, folk and jazz, there is a little something for everyone. SERAPH incorporates blazing harmonica and acoustic grooves into its offering of worship to God.
WWW.BURNINGCOALMINISTRIES.COM
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livingthemessage

by Warren Barfield

> "Open your eyes and there it is! By taking a long and thoughtful look at what God has created, people have always been able to see what their eyes as such can't see: eternal power, for instance, and the mystery of his divine being."
> —Romans 1:19 – 20 as paraphrased in THE MESSAGE

SEEING GOD

This month, recording artist WARREN BARFIELD encourages us to look and see...

One of the things I love most about being a recording artist is getting to meet people from all over the country. I especially enjoy conversations with young people who are just beginning in their faith. At a show in Texas recently, a young man asked me how I knew God was real. He said one of the songs I sang, "Come Alive," really made him think maybe this whole Jesus thing could be more than just his grandma's religion. I told him I believed God was real for many reasons, but the one reason that inspired that song is the fact that everywhere I look I see God. I asked him to spend the next week looking for God, and he would be amazed at what he saw.

Whether you are just starting in your spiritual journey or are quickly approaching the final destination, God is on a mission to be real to you. He is doing so in many ways. To me, He speaks loudest through creation. When was the last time you took Paul's advice in his letter to the Romans and took a "long and thoughtful look at what God has created"? His divine being is all around us. "Open your eyes and there it is!"

Five years ago, someone gave me the devotional biography of Rich Mullins, *An Arrow Pointing to Heaven*, by James Smith. Chapter five had me feeling such a connection with God. He is an artist, too, you know. I am writing songs; He is spinning cosmos into existence with His fingers. The reflection on that chapter opened my eyes to see Christ alive all around me and caused a desire in me to worship Him with every new landscape I viewed.

I am currently reading *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (McGraw-Hill) by Annie Dillard again. She describes the created world like a child explains his favorite candy, game or toy. You can feel her excitement and see her smile in the words. She challenges me to make time to be amazed by God's gift of the earth:

"We must somehow take a wider view, look at the whole landscape, really see it, and describe what's going on here. Then we can at least wail the right question into the swaddling band of darkness, or, if it comes to that, choir the proper praise... I come down to the water to cool my eyes. But everywhere I look I see fire; that which isn't flint is tinder, and the whole world sparks and flames."

Creation is anything but dull. The universe is extravagant, ablaze with inspiration. One cannot help but be drawn to the being that spoke all of this into existence and offer Him praise for His awesome work. I believe God intended it to be so. Pieces of heaven are growing out of the ground or floating in the sky like a gift from God for no other reason but to inform us that we are loved. I believe a simple "thank you" is more praise than you and I can imagine it would be; but if we are truly taking it all in, we will not be able to stop with a "thank you."

"In order that we finite beings may apprehend the Emperor, He translates His glory into multiple forms—into stars, woods, waters, beasts, and the bodies of men." (C.S. Lewis "Williams and the Arthuriad," *The Quotable Lewis* Wayne Martindale and Jerry Root, Editors)

> "Creation is anything but dull. The universe is extravagant, ablaze with inspiration."

Christ is alive. He is alive in the mountains that rise above the clouds. He is alive in the beauty and noise of the ocean. He is alive and springing up all around us in the intricacy that inhabits the sky, water and earth. Watching a flower bloom can be like watching the stone roll away and Christ step out right in front of your eyes to say, "I am alive."

I'm thankful for that guy's question that night in Texas. Maybe you or someone you know has the same question. Is God real? Take a step back. The answer is everywhere. "Open your eyes and there it is!"

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the works of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."
–Psalms 19:1–4a (NIV)

Warren Barfield's latest release, *Reach*, is his sophomore album on Essential Records. For more information visit myspace.com/wblivestuff and warrenbarfield.com.

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ST. LOUIS, MO ..... MAY 10
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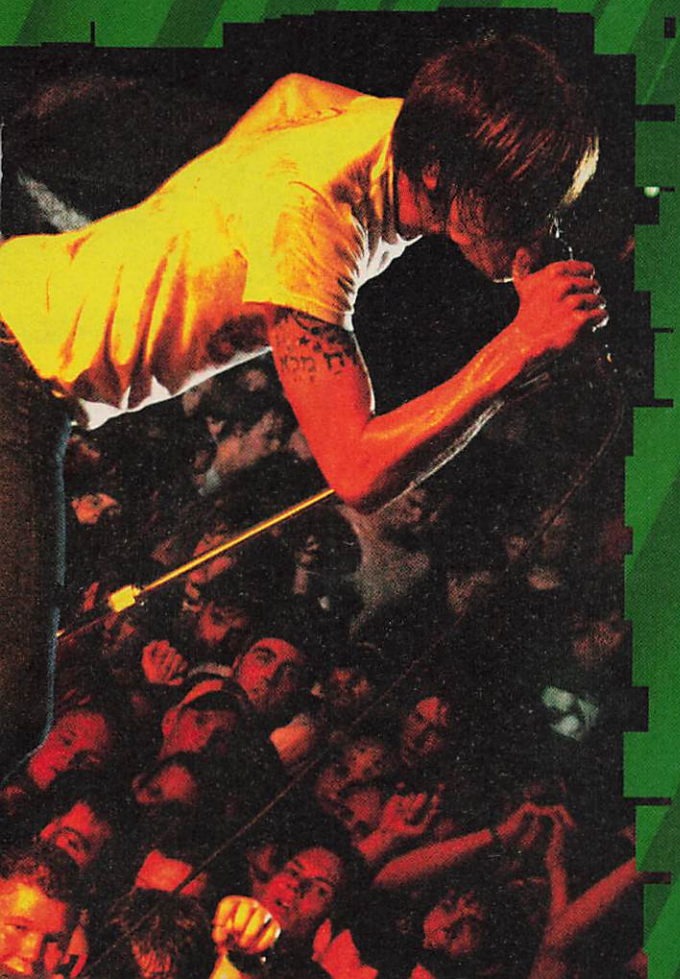
CCM MAGAZINE'S

FESTIVAL + CONFERENCE GUIDE

YOUR GUIDE TO THE HOTTEST FESTIVALS AND CONFERENCES OF 2007



Spring may still be in the air, but summer is just around the corner! You've probably been daydreaming about your summer vacation for quite some time, but, perhaps, you haven't been able to decide upon which festivities you wish to engage in this year. Fear not! We've got the skinny on the season's phattest festivals! We've got the lowdown on the conferences receiving the highest praise! Well, you get the idea.

So, read on. And have your calendar ready. It's time to plan the summer...

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CORNERSTONE FESTIVAL

WHERE: Cornerstone Festival Grounds in Bushnell, IL / Florida Fairgrounds in Orlando, FL
WHEN: Bushnell: June 25-30 / Florida: May 11-12
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: cornerstonefestival.com

After kicking off in 1984, Cornerstone Festival went from a burgeoning regional affair to a national spiritual spectacle intertwining several generations of believers and seekers. The event has always been known for its world class résumé of bands, art gallery displays and seminars, with each year providing an even wider selection of activities and additional relevance in today's complex web of pop culture.

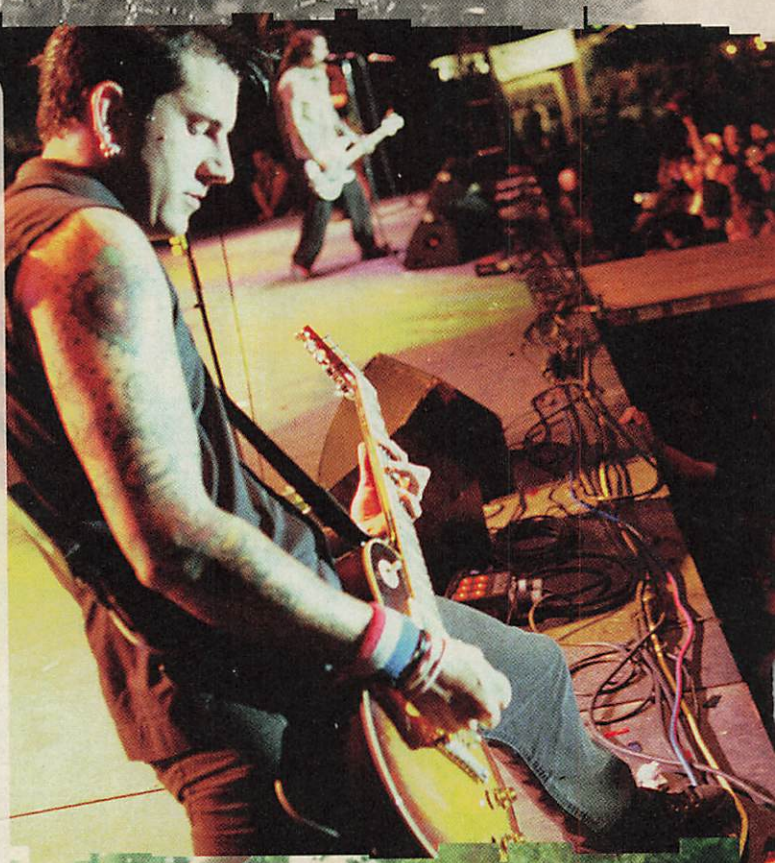
"Among serious music fans, Cornerstone Festival has long been legendary for its breathtaking diversity," echoes John Herrin, Cornerstone Festival director. "From rock to metal core to folk, from hip-hop to punk to electronica, Cornerstone offers the deepest and widest musical program you've ever heard. The impressive legacy of acts flowing from our 'New Band Showcase' to 'Main Stage' and beyond includes Switchfoot, Underoath, Relient K, Norma Jean, Flyleaf, Anberlin, Copeland, Emery, Over the Rhine, Pillar and more. Over 250 bands on 10 different stages. Come listen to your favorite bands and bands everyone will soon be talking about."

Aside from the aforementioned, acts currently booked include Cool Hand Luke, David Crowder Band, Decyfer Down, Edison Glass, Future of Forestry, Glenn Kaiser Band, House of Heroes, Leeland, Leigh Nash, The Myriad, Pigeon John, Skillet, The Violet Burning and The Wedding. As the festival gets closer, many more acts will be booked, plus Cornerstone is always known for bringing old-timers out of the woodwork for exclusive reunions. Previous years have included the newly reconvened Stryper and The 77s, in addition to spiritually-tinged secular stars The Call.

Beyond established acts, the "New Band Showcase" (sponsored by Greenville College) has been a staple of the event for years. Past winners have included P.O.D., Sixpence None the Richer, Eisley and Over the Rhine, all of whom have amassed significant Christian and mainstream market attention. Stop by to see who could be next to hit the map of musical and ministry impact!

Several bonus attractions include a gorgeous and spacious 625-acre campground (with its own 125-acre lake) for camping, swimming, canoeing and a program of competitive sports. Several speaker sessions are also lined up, covering topics such as music, social justice, philosophical and theological debate, romantic relationships and practical spirituality. The grounds also host several multi media displays, such as workshops, sculpture walks, dance sessions, prose and poetry readings, and film screenings.

"For veteran Cornerstoners, the festival is an annual renewal of vision they can't get anywhere else and can't imagine doing without," adds Herrin, also citing the high volume of new faces that attend each year. "Cornerstone's real draw is a sense of community, diversity, creativity and worship that shatters the usual and releases the possible."



CORNERSTONE FESTIVAL 2007

BUSHNELL, ILLINOIS JUNE 25-30

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CORNERSTONE CALIFORNIA

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For more information, please visit:
cornerstonefestival.com/california

CREATION FESTIVAL

WHERE: Agape Farm in Mt. Union, PA (Creation Northeast) / Gorge Amphitheater in George, WA (Creation Northwest)
WHEN: June 27-30 (Creation Northeast) / July 25-28 (Creation Northwest)
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: creationfest.com

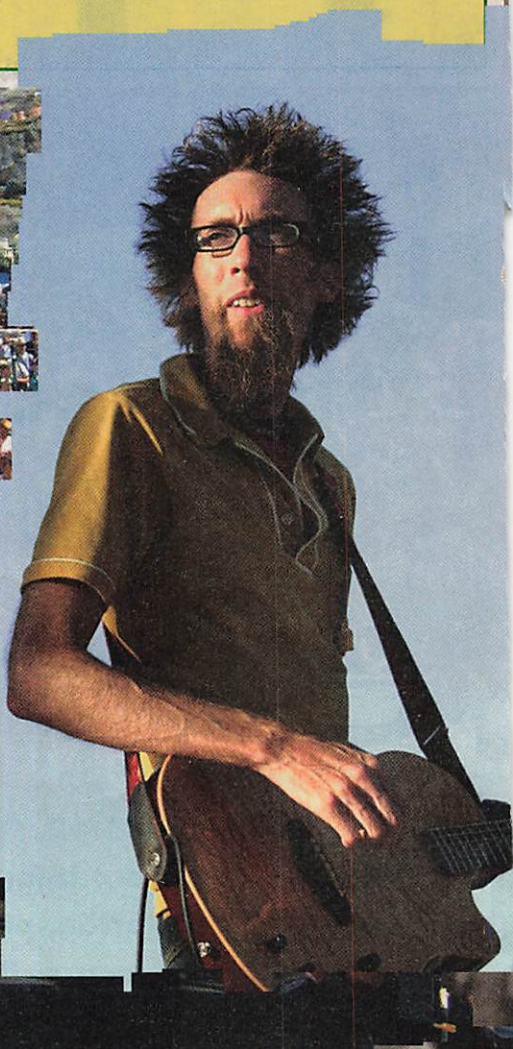
Music lovers in the Northeast and Northwest can both take advantage of similar line-ups and spiritually centered activities in two distinctly different environments when Creation invades each territory this summer. The first celebration kicks off June 27-30 at the Agape Farm, which is staged on the gorgeous mountain terrain of Mount Union, Pennsylvania, while a second installment, July 25-28, sets up shop at the Gorge Amphitheater in George, Washington. This year marks the greenery flanked Gorge's 10th anniversary hosting the festival, the location which also served as the recent recording venue for a Dave Matthews Band concert CD and DVD.

No matter what the location, fans will be treated to a variety filled roster of singers, bands and speakers that includes main stage artists such as Switchfoot, Relient K, Casting Crowns, newsboys, Third Day, David Crowder Band, Kutless and Israel & New Breed. Relative newcomers include Leeland, BarlowGirl, Bethany Dillon, Aaron Shust and Ayiesha Woods, plus speakers Ron Luce (founder of Teen Mania Ministries), Bob Lenz (president of Life Promotions), Duffy Robbins, Margaret Copeland and Jay & Laura Laffoon (Celebrate Ministries founders).

Alternative music appreciators are sure to find themselves at the Tooth & Nail Records sponsored "X2007 Fringe Stage," featuring label favorites and other current talent such as Emery, Flyleaf, Family Force 5, Project 86, Hawk Nelson, John Reuben, Pillar, Superchick, MOC, Fireflight, Mainstay and Seventh Day Slumber. Other attractions include the inaugural "Generator Stage," which gives attendees a chance to see local and regional talent in unplugged environments.

There's also the late night "Creation Café," featuring comedy, blues and the "Indiescovery Ultimate Battle of the Bands" (where the winner has the opportunity to open Saturday's "Fringe Stage" and record a demo for a major Christian record label). Several seminars and worship sessions will be staged throughout each campus, along with a "Kids Grove" with children's crafts, puppets and music. As an added bonus, look for athletically inclined stations featuring X-Games with climbing walls, spider jumps, sumo wrestling, a skateboard and BMX ministry, a gear giveaway and vendor exhibit area boasting nearly 200 booths of merchandise, ministry information and other recreation.

"For nearly three decades, the Creation Festivals have gathered believers from all over the world," says Pastor Harry Thomas, festival co-founder. "Our prayer for Creation '07 is that people will be changed, restored and challenged to serve the Lord and make a difference in this world. You are invited to come and experience what could easily be the highlight of your summer and maybe your life!"



CREATION 2007

JUNE 27 TO 30 - AGAPE FARM - MT. UNION, PA

JULY 25 TO 28 - GORGE AMPHITHEATER - GEORGE, WA

RELIENT K · SWITCHFOOT · NEWSBOYS · CASTING CROWNS · THIRD DAY · TOBY MAC · KUTLESS · DAVID CROWDER · ISRAEL & NEW BREED · LEELAND · BARLOW GIRL · THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH · SALVADOR · SKILLET · KJ 52 · BETHANY DILLON DISCIPLE THE AFTERS · SANCTUS REAL · GRITS · STELLAR KART · PHIL WICKHAM · STARFIELD · STORYSIDE B · PARACHUTE BAND AYIESHA WOODS · EMERY · FLYLEAF · HAWK NELSON · FAMILY FORCE 5 · PROJECT 86 · SUPERCHIC(K) · PILLAR · JOHN REUBEN HOUSE OF HEROES · FALLING UP · SEVENTH DAY SLUMBER DAY OF FIRE · MOC · FIREFLIGHT · MAINSTAY · VOICE · EDISON GLASS SPEAKERS · BOB LENZ · RON LUCE · MARK MATLOCK · WESS STAFFORD · DUFFY ROBBINS · GREG STIER · JOSHUA HARRIS · PAM STENZEL REGGIE DABBS · MARGARET COPELAND · JAY & LAURA LAFFOON · JEREMY KINGSLEY · MICHAEL YANKOSKI JOSEPH ROJAS OTHER FEATURES CANDLELIGHT SERVICE · PRAYER TENT · FIREWORKS · GEAR GIVEAWAY · HUGE VIDEO SCREENS EXHIBIT AREA YOUTH LEADERS VIP AREA · YOUTH LEADER SEMINARS · X-GAMES · MOUNTAIN TOP LOOKOUT · FOOD COURT WATER BAPTISM CAMPFIRES · BEAUTIFUL CAMPING · FUN CONTESTS · MODERN WORSHIP TENT · MUSICIAN SEMINARS · COMEDY NIGHT · BLUES NIGHT · NATIONAL TALENT SEARCH · SKATEBOARD & BMX.

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KINGDOM BOUND

WHERE: Darien Lake Theme Park in Darien Center, NY
WHEN: August 5-8
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: kingdombound.org

As has been the tradition for the past two decades, Kingdom Bound is all about bringing families together and sharing the gospel with the masses. In order to help facilitate those goals throughout the 21st annual presentation, organizers have booked a slew of familiar worship leaders including Chris Tomlin, David Crowder Band, Charlie Hall, Desperation Band, Parachute Band and Lincoln Brewster. These praise focused sets are balanced with prominent rock and pop performers such as newsboys, Casting Crowns, TobyMac, Disciple, Superchick, Skillet and a special return engagement of Geoff Moore and the Distance.

"One major memory in the past is when Steven Curtis Chapman joined Geoff Moore for a song," recalls Donna M. Russo, Executive Director for Kingdom Bound Ministries. "However, what has spoken to me the most are the past two years during the newsboys' closing concert, when Peter Furler would open his Bible and share from his heart what God was doing in his life and challenge the crowd to seek God for themselves. Peter was so transparent with the crowd, and God moved in a powerful way."

Aside from this year's marking the newsboys' 18th appearance, a special midway stage will be expanded to showcase new and indie talent. Motivational speakers are also a top priority, including Reggie Dabbs, Bob Lenz, Pam Stenzel, Ken Freeman and Jeremy Kingsley; and children can attend God Rocks and VeggieTales presentations every day.

"Our mission is to present the gospel through the performing arts, inviting people to find their relationship with Jesus or rekindle their commitment," sums up Russo. "The most rewarding time of this event is hearing about the lives that are changed forever as a result of something that was sung or spoken."

KINGDOM BOUND '07 FESTIVAL
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Psalm 22:27

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Visit www.kingdombound.org for the complete lineup!

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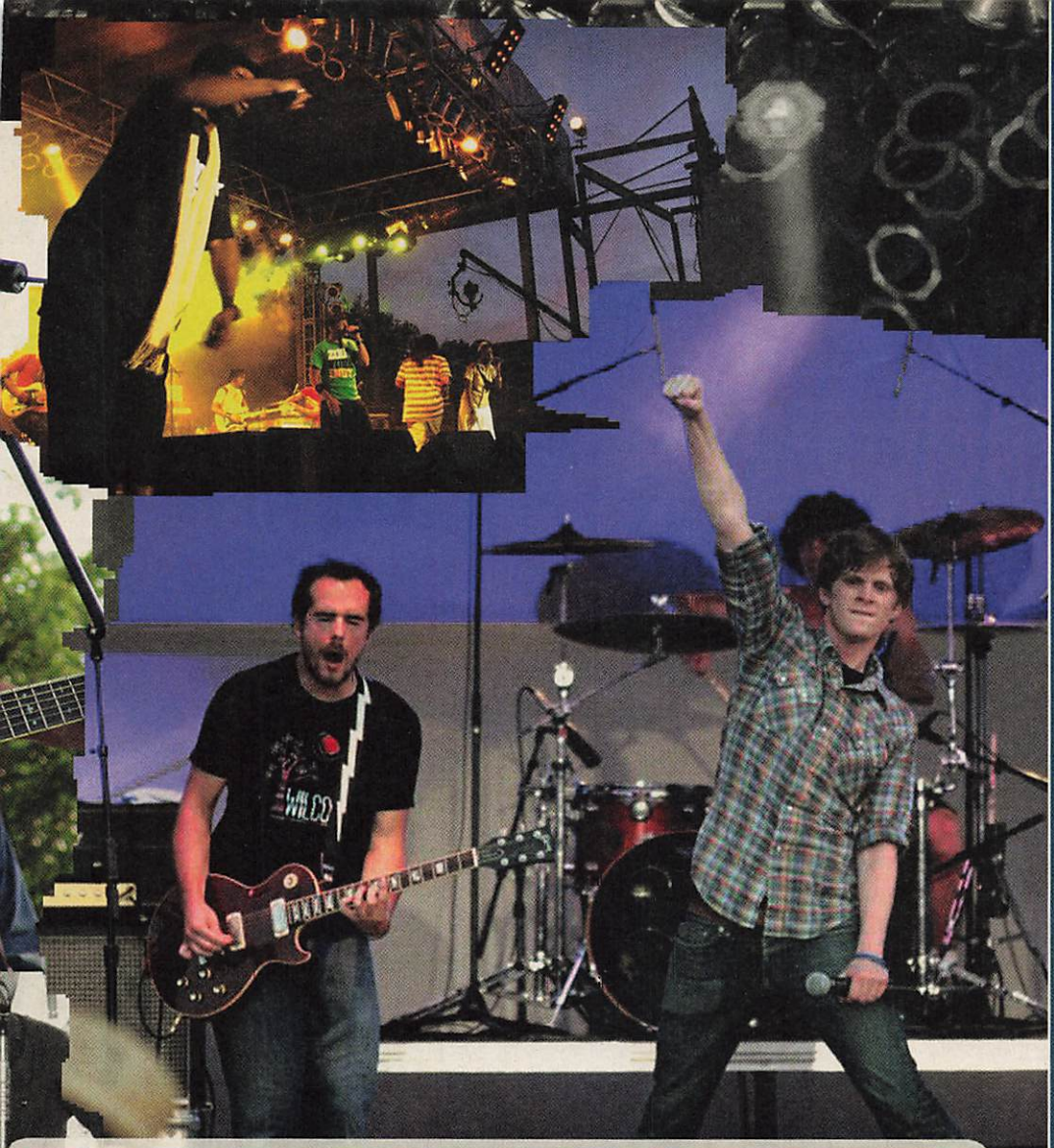

ALIVE FESTIVAL

WHERE: Clay's Park Resort in Canal Fulton, OH
WHEN: June 20-23
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: alive.org

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Ohio's Alive Festival, and promoters are pulling out all the stops to make this the most amazing year yet! A top notch roster of artists includes the mainstream savvy likes of Switchfoot, Relient K, Flyleaf, The Afters, Family Force 5, Emery and BarlowGirl. And of course there's a slew of Christian music mainstays including Jeremy Camp, newsboys, Chris Tomlin, David Crowder Band, Kutless, Leeland, Starfield, Hawk Nelson, Pocket Full of Rocks, House of Heroes and Seventh Day Slumber.

Beyond the tunes, several speakers are booked to present a wide swath of seeker friendly messages and spiritually enriching dialogues, while several worship sessions and services are also scheduled throughout the weekend. Perhaps Alive Festival staff members Bill & Kathy Graening summarize the event's mission best in an open letter to attendees: "We'd like to encourage you to make this year's festival a life-changing experience for someone. Please invite a friend from your school, a neighbor, or a family member to attend, to not only have a great vacation with you but also to hear about the most important relationship they can have—a relationship with God!"

ALIVE
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JUNE 20-23
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20 ANNIVER CELEBRA
FEATURING
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CHRIS TOMLIN
TOBYMAC
DAVID CROWDER BAND
KUTLESS
SUPERCHIC[K]
LEELAND
ALSO: HAWK NELSON, FAMILY FORCE 5, SHANE
THE AFTERS, STARFIELD, BUILDING 429, STELL
EMERY, SEVENTH DAY SLUMBER, HOUSE OF HER
AARON SHUST, VICKY BEECHING, MAINSTAY, J
THE WEDDING, GROUP 1 CREW, THIS BEAUTIFUL
EVERYDAY SUNDAY, JIMMY NEEDHAM, BRANDO
EDISON GLASS, AYIESHA WOODS, JACKSON W
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AGAPEFEST

WHERE: Greenville College in Greenville, IL
WHEN: April 27-28
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: agapefest.com

This year marks the 30th anniversary of AgapeFest, a student-run music festival started in 1978 by Greenville College. From then until now, the event has literally hosted just about everyone under the Christian rock umbrella, from dcTalk at the peak of the *Jesus Freak* era to former campus dwellers turned international superstars Jars of Clay to Jeremy Camp long before he was famous.

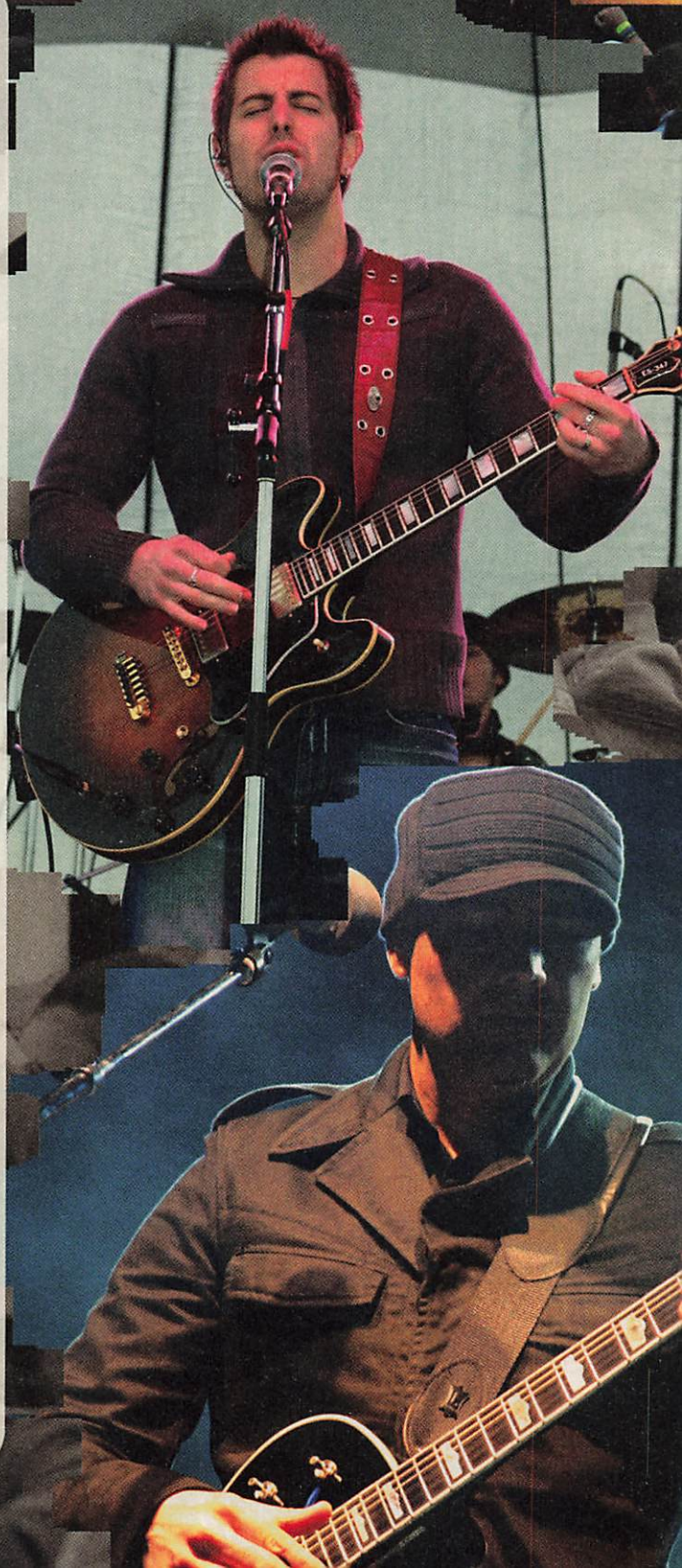
But now Camp's amongst the illustrious list of headliners that also includes the enduring and always action packed newsboys, current crossovers Skillet and pop/punkers Hawk Nelson, along with a significant supporting cast. Also be on the lookout for explosive sets by Stellar Kart, KJ-52, Run Kid Run, The Elms, Spoken, needtobreathe, This Beautiful Republic, Eleventyseven, Sanctus Real, Family Force 5 and Falling Up. "Two days, two stages—Agape offers audience favorites as well as up-and-coming acts," shares Robyn Florian, Director of College Relations & Marketing. "Greenville College also hosts the annual Agape 'Battle of the Bands' competition on second stage Friday afternoon."

While young bands will have the chance to strut their stuff and be discovered by fans, attendees will also have a chance to get up close and personal with the line-up. An exclusive autograph tent will feature many of the performers stopping by for meet & greets throughout the extravaganza, posing for pictures and signing autographs. Those who might be new to the Christian music scene, along with faithful followers, can also preview and possibly pick up the artists' latest projects at an extensive retail area.

Though the Illinois event isn't all that close to downtown Chicago, alternative rock pilgrims travel from all over the Midwest (and the nation for that matter) for the unique weekend excursion. But they best be prepared for elements of the "Windy City" anyway—for instance, an incredibly unpredictable nature which has always added an extra dash of excitement to the grounds.

"Over the past 30 years, the weather has been a character in the plot," adds Florian. "We'll never forget newsboys singing about 'a million raindrops' as it's pouring rain on the audience and chasing drum sets across the stage at WindFest '06."

Still, fans need not fear the unpredictable climate, as it's part of AgapeFest's charm and has created some of the most memorable concert encounters for some of the aforementioned artists. And unlike major stadium events and ballgames, umbrellas are always welcome, and ponchos are amply available. Add in a spacious campground to crash for the night, plus a free parking lot for cars, and the campus is sure to glisten with fun focused fellowship and a spiritually charged entertainment experience.



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Skillet
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KJ-52
Sanctus Real
The Elms

APRIL 27-28, 2007
www.agapefest.com

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www.fishnetministries.org

Kid Sessions
Teen Sessions

ROCK THE DESERT

WHERE: RTD Encampment in Odessa, TX
WHEN: August 10-11
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: rockthedesert.com

The Lone Star State is about to get even hotter when Rock The Desert sweeps through Odessa with a wave of pop, rock and alternative music acts. The annual extravaganza features the best national talent with a handful of local inclusions, drawing die-hard appreciators and new fans with a compelling, diverse and exciting line-up. Though several additional acts will be announced in the coming months, the cards are shaping up strong thus far, featuring worship leader extraordinaire Chris Tomlin, acoustic troubadour Shawn McDonald, the fist-pumping Hawk Nelson and teen pop princesses BarlowGirl (and that's just the first day!).

The second day's installment includes worshipful rockers Kutless, the high octane Family Force 5, enduring tunesmith Todd Agnew and hard rock act Emery (who are straight off the Nintendo Fusion Tour with secular stars Hawthorne Heights and Christian crossovers Relient K). Other attractions include Brock Gill, who mixes jaw-dropping illusions with comedic anecdotes, along with inspiring speaker Joe White.

Aside from the already cemented superstars, attendees can jump in on the booking action by casting their votes in the "2007 RTD New Artist Contest." The finalists have been narrowed down, and now the power is in the hands of fans who can fill out their ballots online (though only one vote can be given per artist). Two lucky bands will be chosen for showcase spots, which could very well be a "big break" considering the magnitude of this event.

But more than launching the next major band, organizers hope to simultaneously reach the lost while encouraging the body of Christ. According to its main mission statement, Rock The Desert seeks "to reach today's generation through contemporary Christian music and recreational facilities so that they may hear the life changing message of Jesus Christ." Throughout the lengthy line-up of artists, entertainers, speakers and opportunities for fellowship, those goals are sure to come to fruition.

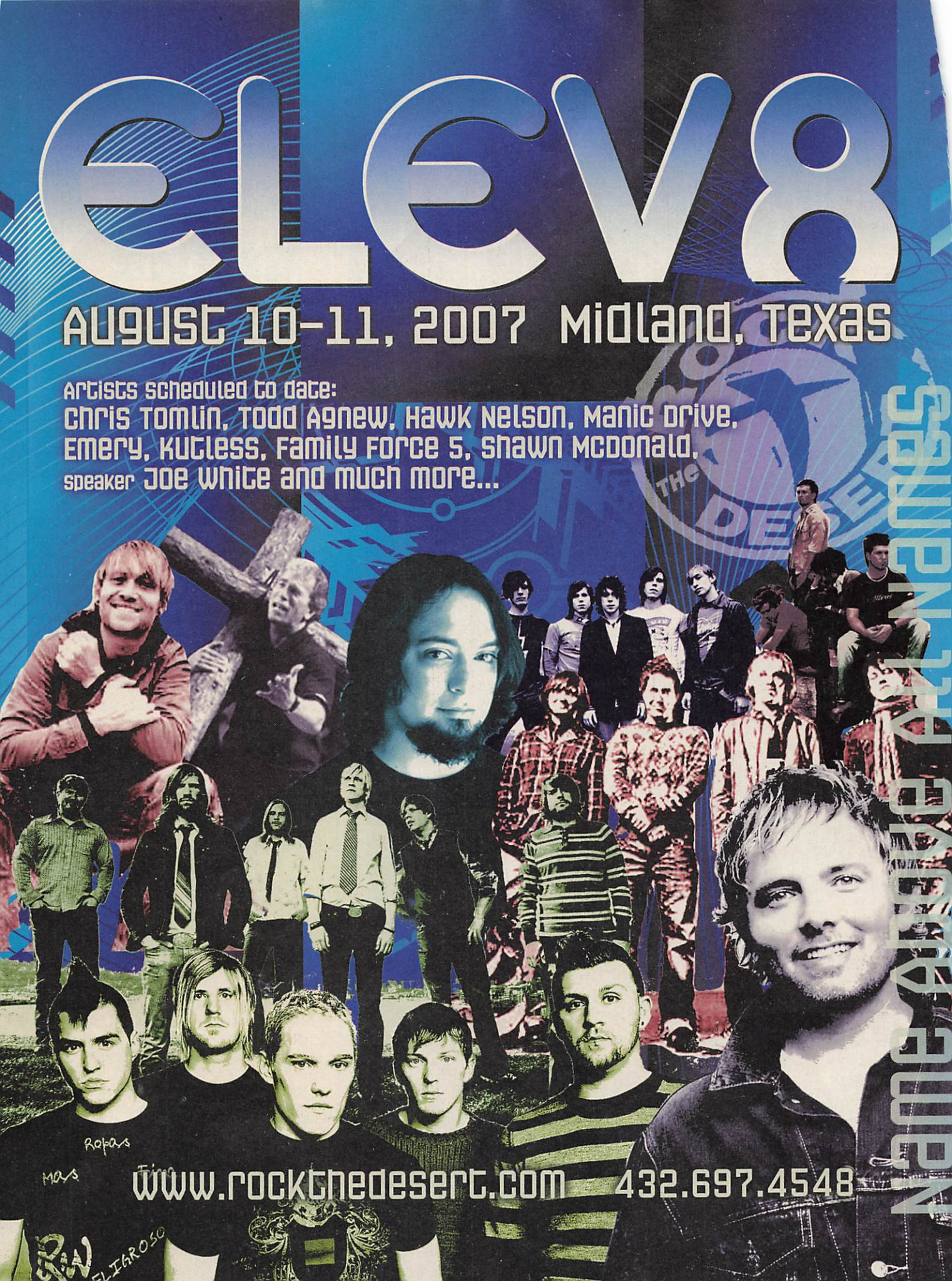
As for the venue itself, this festival is now staged at the RTD encampment, a massive outdoor park facility that houses over a hundred thousand concertgoers (which the event has reached on several occasions). Rock The Desert sure has grown from its humble beginnings in 2000 at the parking lot of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, which drew 4,000 fans. The momentum built the following year to a newsboys-headlined event and the addition of a JumboTron screen, while the past several years have introduced even more major bands, athletic events, shopping experiences and Sunday morning worship services (which have previously included Watermark). And given the early forecast for this year's blowout, Rock The Desert will only continue to grow, touch souls and be one of this summer's most sought after festivals.

FISHNET FESTIVAL

WHERE: Fishnet Life Center in Fort Royal, VA
WHEN: July 19-21
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: fishnetministries.org

Fishnet Ministries has always revolved around its annual July festival, and this year marks its 33rd anniversary. The purpose of the event is to offer believers and non-believers alike an inspirational vacation opportunity, educational experience and spiritual encounter with Christ. No matter one's denomination or background, all can take comfort in a weekend ripe with Christian concerts, encouraging speakers and family centered fun.

While organizers are still putting finishing touches on this summer's roster, last year's line-up was spearheaded by Big Daddy Weave, Sonicflood and Tree63. Aside from national acts, the event also boasts the top local names in musical talent, while exposing the surrounding community as a whole to a wealth of Christian-based arts. Even renowned speaker Josh McDowell is impressed, stating on the festival's website: "Fishnet is one of the few ministries I know who have found a balance between music and the Word, discipleship and evangelism."


ELEV8
August 10-11, 2007 Midland, Texas
Artists scheduled to date:
Chris Tomlin, Todd Agnew, Hawk Nelson, Manic Drive,
Emery, Kutless, Family Force 5, Shawn McDonald,
speaker Joe White and much more...
Name Artist Names
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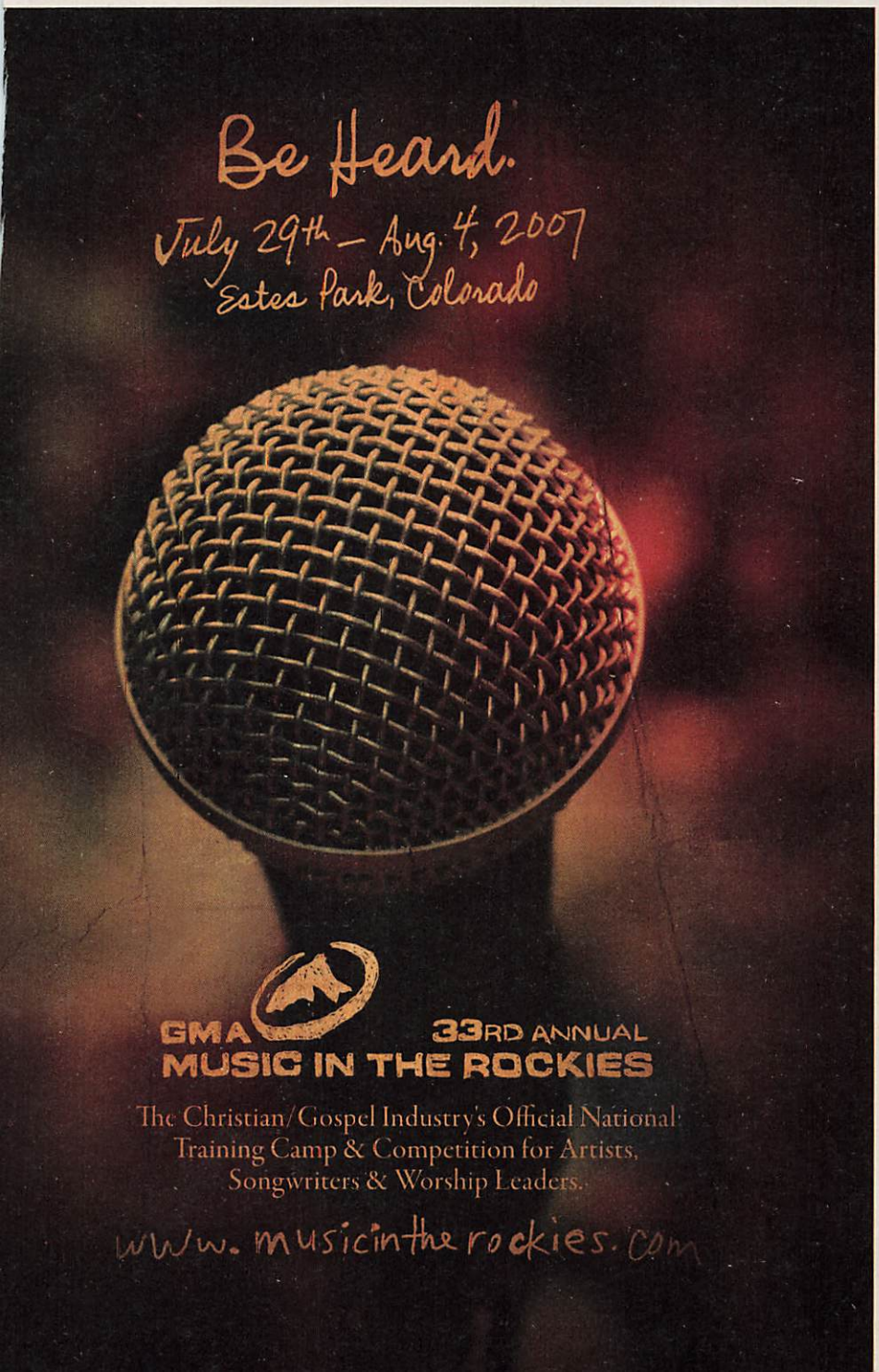


GMA MUSIC IN THE ROCKIES

WHERE: The Estes Park Center/ YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, CO
WHEN: July 29-August 4
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: musicintherockies.com

For music fans, the 33rd Annual GMA Music in the Rockies can be a chance to see some of Christian music's top names in an intimate, story-teller-styled environment. For hopeful artists and music ministers, the event could very well be a life changing experience chock full of networking, performing, entertaining and worshiping.

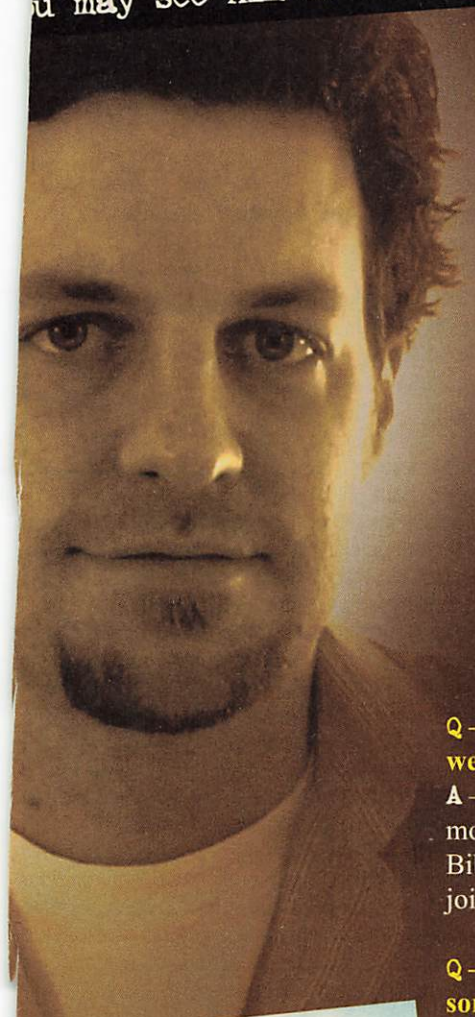
No matter on what side of the fence one stands, all will have the chance to attend concerts by The Crabb Family, Natalie Grant, Brian Littrell, Sandi Patty and Mark Schultz, with many more being announced as the summer nears. The latter category can also take comfort in the fact that Chris Tomlin, Point of Grace and Mark Lowry have all participated in the past and benefited from the attention and educational aspects of the gathering.

In addition to the concerts and teaching, one recurring highlight of the week is the GMA Academy Artist & Song Competition, which is the Christian music industry's official talent contest for unsigned artists and songwriters. Everyone who enters has the opportunity to perform a tune live in front of judges and fellow attendees with titles awarded in the "Vocal Solo," "Vocal Group," "Band," "Instrumental" and "Song" categories.

Due to the hands-on, seminar-focused nature of this event, full registration starts at $325 and will increase as the event date nears. For those simply wanting to check out individual shows, tickets start at $16 a night, though the entire six-night series can be purchased for $100. Either way, it's an event not to be missed, sure to leave long lasting memories and lay the groundwork for a potentially prosperous future!

Who is this Guy?

You may see him at a festival this summer because...



The ministry platform of Christian speaker Jeremy Kingsley has been grow steadily the last few years. Recently he has burst on the scene at music festivals, large youth events, and Christian colleges all over the country. Who is this guy? Where is he coming from and why is his style of Bible teachin connecting so well with Generation X and Y?

Q – You were born in Wisconsin, in Jr. High and High school you lived in Washington DC, you went to college in South Carolina and now live there. That is a random mix of cultures.

A – It is, I'm a dude with a jacked up accent (smiling). People I meet are like, "Where are yo from?"

Q – The past year or so, you have really had some great opportunities to speak. You hav been at some of the largest Christian events in the U.S. This summer you will be speaki at a number of the big music festivals like Creation, Sonshine, and Kingdom Bound; yo are on the Clarity Tour with Student Life. How did all this happen?

A – I only know God is doing it. People are starving for the Word of God. It is humbling anc am very thankful that the phone is ringing.

Q – Your style is really connecting with Generation X and Y. What is it about you they relate well to?

A – Well, it's not my accent (laughing), clothes, or what music I like. What I hear from people the most is that they appreciate the transparency, the passion, and that I use the Bible. When I teach th Bible, I try to NOT teach on things I haven't wrestled with in my own heart. I want the audience t join me in the pursuit of getting to know and love Jesus.

Q – Your teaching style is very unique, it's definitely not "old school." You use a little humor, some illustrations, but you really stick to scripture and "get into" the story of the passage yo are teaching. Talk about that.

A – hmm. Everyone is unique. People respond to you when you are true to your personality and authentic. You know, I trust God's Word. When I teach from a historical narrative passage (a Bibl story) I want to be there, I want to hear the sounds, see the layout, know the people talking, sense intensity of the situation. That is where I try to go and hope the audience will go with me. When put ourselves "in the passage," it really helps us understand why it was written.

Q – What are some of the questions you hear young people are dealing with now?

A – I hear two big things coming from youth and young adults today – "What is life really about?" & "What is the deal with Jesus?" Which is great, because life is really about Jesus I feel like my calling is to point at Jesus, not at myself, not at American media icons, at Jesu I love using the Bible to do it. If we can get to know Jesus, there is a chance we may fall in love with Him. If that happens, watch out! When people are desperately in love with Jesus, awesome things happen.

Q – What is your passion?

A – There is a saying at my alma mater Columbia International University (www.ciu.edu) th says, "To Know Him and Make Him Known." That's my passion.

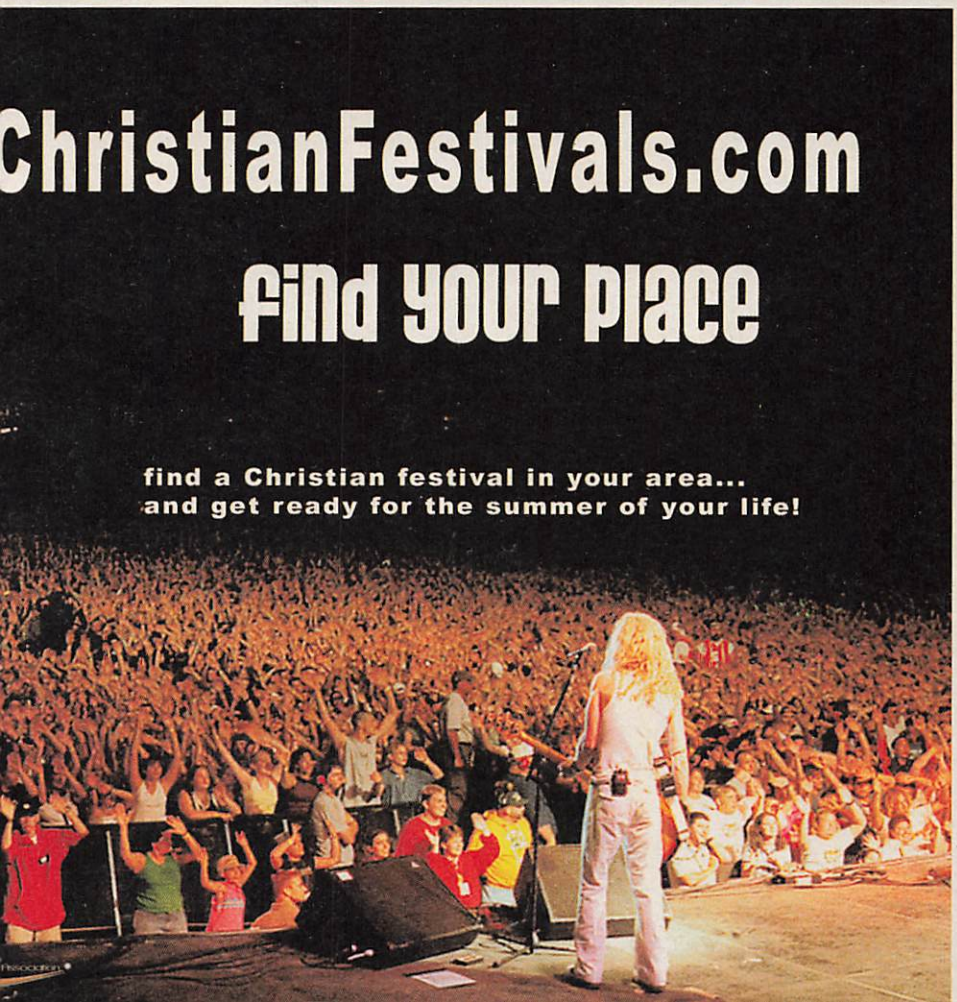
Visit www.jeremykingsley.com to watch videos, check out his book "One Step Closer" and see if he may speaking at a Christian event near you! Jeremy proudly supports Compassion International.

ChristianFestivals.com

With the plethora of summer festivals, it can be quite a task to keep track of dates, cities, band line-ups and ministry-related activities. But thanks to ChristianFestivals.com, the worry and workload has been taken out in favor of having fun in the sun to the soundtrack of yesterday's, today's and tomorrow's favorite Christian musicians. The website serves as a coalition of sorts, providing links to several of the country's most prominent festivals, including the time, place, specific details and links all in one handy location.

Other features include a map of America indicating which states and regions are staging celebrations this year, along with a contest to win tickets to promoted events, throughout the browsing experience. Fans who participate in a short survey will be automatically entered into a drawing and could find themselves on the guest list at one of this year's most lauded events!

For additional information, log on to christianfestivals.com.



THE BIG TICKET FESTIVAL

WHERE: Otsego County Fairgrounds in Gaylord, MI
WHEN: June 22-23
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
thebigticketfestival.com

One of Christian music's newest but fastest growing weekend events is Michigan's Big Ticket Festival, which may only be two years old, but boasts an incredible line-up of major talent throughout various artistic disciplines. Major players in the 30+ stron musical line-up include newsboys, Jeremy Camp, Chri Tomlin, Jars of Clay, Skillet, Sanctus Real, Tree63 Kutless, Disciple and Hundred Year Storm.

"Music lovers should attend our event this yea because of the variety of music that we offer," suggest spokesperson Kristi Catt. "We really strive to boo music that any member of the family can enjoy. W have worship with Chris Tomlin, fun for all ages with th newsboys, a little taste of Christian rock with Skillet an Christian hard rock with Disciple. With our variety, an music lover will be able to enjoy our festival!"

Yet music moguls aren't the only audience for thi truly all-encompassing event, which also features "Ou Kid Zone" (for ages 10 and under) the "Livin' It" extrem sports tour (including BMX, motocross and skateboar demos), fellow biking squad Riders 4 Christ, plu speakers David Nasser and Jose Zayas. Saturda morning will also feature a special "Coffee Hous Session," with music and devotions by various artists Dramas will also be provided by the Ragamuffin Theatr & Company, a troupe dedicated to excellence in th performance arts, with the staging of "The Price o Egypt."

"Our main theme this year is 'To Live God Loud,' Catt continues. "This theme is being carried throughou our festival. It is the idea that people need to live Go throughout their lives, 24/7, to the point where othe people should be able to tell we're Christians by hov 'loud'—not volume, but lifestyle—we're living God."

The Big Ticket Festival is a production of Fre Spirit Ministries of Northern Michigan, Inc., whose focu is sharing the eternal message of Jesus Christ throug innovative evangelism. Although the heart of th ministry is directed towards youth, many of its activitie target all age groups by bringing together families church groups and community members with a focu on love, peace, communication and harmony.

To dive even deeper into the family-focuse experience, outdoor enthusiasts can also take advantag of on- and off-site camping, though the less adventurou can indulge in nearby hotels. Aside from attracting throng of locals, The Big Ticket Festival is quickly becoming a vacation destination for families and youth groups a across the country.

THE BIG TICKET FESTIVAL

Gaylord, MI
June 22&23, 2007

NEWS BOYS | CHRIS TOMLIN | JARS OF CLAY | JEREMY CAMP

35 BANDS★4 STAGES★EXTREME SPORTS

Other Artists:

- Kutless
- Barlow Girl
- Superchic[k]
- Tree 63
- Sanctus Real
- Skillet
- And Many More...

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- Kids Zone
- Bible Man
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- Prayer Tents

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INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP INSTITUTE

WHERE: Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex
WHEN: July 3-6, 2007
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: worshipinstitute.com

LaMar Boschman, founder of WorshipInstitute.com, grew up believing that extravagant worship was irreverent. Then in 1973 he attended Glad Tidings Temple in Vancouver. The 120-voice choir wore robes, sang without printed music, marched down the aisle from the back of the church and sang a four-part harmony that gave Boschman chills. For the first time, he found vertical worship. In his newfound freedom and obedience to the Scriptures—like, *"Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and bless the Lord!"* (Psalms 134)—LaMar transcended from spectator to true worshiper.

Go to any athletic competition across the globe, and you will quickly discover that worship is natural to all humans. God pre-wired us toward the act of worship. Simply put, we worship what we value. Someone accurately said, "The trail of your affections will inevitably lead to the throne of what you worship."

Too often, we church leaders bring our golden calves into the temple under the illusion of improving worship. Consequently, worship can become too complicated. We download, digitize and drive our worship with technology. Sometimes we seem to believe it is our job to make worship more appealing and marketable. We become so enamored with the sensational, the new and the alluring that we forget that worship is for God—not us.

Our modern attitudes about worship spring from what lies beneath the surface. Worship has the power to shape us, and we find ourselves becoming conformed to what we worship—whether good or evil. That is why Christian church services or concerts do not make us true worshipers. Unless we develop consistent lives of worship based on God's character, we risk missing out on one of the richest and most wholesome experiences in life—growing ourselves and our congregations in Christ's likeness.

According to a Barna research study, only three out of ten church-going adults view worship as something focused primarily on God, while one out of every five admit they have no idea what the most important outcome of worship is. More than 20 years ago, the International Worship Institute (IWI) was formed to prepare *"true worshipers that will worship the Father in spirit and truth"* (John 4:24). Boschman is a pioneer of this grassroots worship renewal, defined by the sheer desire to know God and to experience His presence.

Since the early '70s, Boschman and his wife, Teresa, have crisscrossed the U.S. and traveled the world to share the reality of spiritual worship and biblical music. Through the IWI, other global institutes, workshops and resources, WorshipInstitute.com continues to expand its mission of equipping leaders and worshipers and taking them into deeper, more effective worship. The ministry of WorshipInstitute.com will help you and your church go beyond the status quo. Here are some of the front lines of WorshipInstitute.com's work:

TRANSCEND 1.0 (July 3-6, 2007): WorshipInstitute.com's four-day intensive *Transcend 1.0* (also known as the International Worship Institute) will be held at the luxurious Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Transcend 1.0 will present 40+ worship leaders and bands, including Martha Munizzi, Tim Hughes, Shane & Shane, Tommy Walker, Ross Parsley, Morris Chapman, Lindell Cooley, Darrell Evans and, of course, LaMar Boschman. Michael W. Smith will be presented with the Cherub Award. From 9 a.m. to midnight, worship leaders, musicians, pastors, dancers, choir directors, youth and adults from around the globe will embark on an unforgettable journey into transcendent worship that includes about 100 workshops, Bible classes, musical, dance and technical training and vertical worship sessions.

***So Amazing* CD**: LaMar has searched the globe for original songs to help worshipers transcend. He found 12 great, new worship songs, which he, Steve Garrett, Lani Stacy and Susan Gray recorded at the 2006 International Worship Institute. Now captured on the *So Amazing* live worship CD are transcendent moments that occurred in God's presence. In fact, the CD comes with a warning label: "Listen at your own risk, not responsible for signs and wonders that may occur because of God's revealed presence."

For information on the International Worship Institute's Transcend 1.0, the So Amazing *CD, pictures, articles, lead sheets and worship music, visit www.worshipinstitute.com.*

(Article submitted by Worship Institute / edited by Andy Argyrakis and Kristi Henson)

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TRANSCEND 1.0

INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP INSTITUTE

JULY 3-6, 2007

LaMar Boschman / Host/Worship Mentor

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SEMINARS4WORSHIP

WHERE: *Various Locations*
WHEN: *Various Dates*
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: seminars4worship.com

The Mobile, Alabama-based record label Integrity Music has birthed some of the most progressive and innovative worship leaders of our time, not to mention a slew of incredibly inspiring worship services captured on CD format. Its list of vertically tinged artists has included Don Moen, Paul Baloche, Israel Houghton, Tim Hughes and Ron Kenoly, amongst many more throughout its historical and highly impactful 20 year history.

But now, the beloved ministry sets its sights on cultivating new praise focused talent, while simultaneously equipping the church to step up its game when it comes to worshiping with artistic excellence in mind. As a result, Seminars4Worship was born, a touring, two-day seminar for pastors and worship teams to assist them in effectively leading transformational worship services on both congregational and concert levels. During the day, participants are taught various methods of leading worship while discussing the subject of worship with fellow leaders, though the evening scales back from business to all-out sessions of praise. The event prides itself on being cross-cultural, cross-generational and cross-denominational, with this year's theme titled "Journey to the Heart of Worship."

Pastors are encouraged to attend and an emphasis is placed on the balance between being a church's senior worship leader and mentoring an effective praise team. Music ministers and worship leaders are taught how to tailor worship experiences for their particular parishes, while praise team, worship band and choir members enrich their skills and come to understand the biblical role of a worship musician. A special segment is geared toward children and youth leaders, along with a final faction anchored around multimedia support personnel (including all the "ins and outs" of technology and multimedia advancements within multi-sensory worship).

Several new additions have also surfaced this year, such as fresh tracks focused on equipping the entire church worship team, classes geared specifically to address the needs of small churches, plus Thursday night "unplugged" worship experiences with top songwriters telling stories behind their most famous praise tunes. In addition, Friday nights feature multi-artist worship concerts, which are ticketed to the general public but free for conference attendees. Artists include Don Moen, Martha Munizzi, Paul Baloche, Lincoln Brewster, New Life Worship featuring Ross Parsley and Desperation, Robin Mark, Jared Anderson and many more. Beyond the traveling cavalcade of Seminars4Worship, this year's extra attraction is an intimate retreat running from August 28-31 at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado.

"One of our special Seminars4Worship events each year is our 'Worship Songwriter Retreat,'" confirms Pam Brown of Integrity Live's marketing department. "It's extremely popular, and we keep the size minimal so it's a more intimate setting. But it sells out quickly! Days are spent in instruction, fellowship and times of deep refreshment with leading worship leaders and songwriters. Each attendee will have a song reviewed by a leading songwriter."

For additional information about all of this year's Seminars4Worship sessions, including specific tour dates, log on to seminars4worship.com.

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December Radio
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Josh Wilson
Flatfoot 56
s Beautiful Republic
Group One Crew
Eleventyseven
Downhere
By the Tree
Leigh Nash
Jimmy Needham
Dalton
ocket Full Of Rocks
undred Year Storm
Starfield

the Logan SHOW

Is proud to announce the winners of 2007's TLS Pigeon Awards. We want to thank all of the artists for all their hard work this year and for all the great moments on The Logan Show.

The Logan Show wants to congratulate Aaron Shust, Toby Mac, Sanctus Real, December Radio, Krystal Meyers, Pocket Full of Rocks, and Red for both their Dove Awards and their Pigeon Award Nominations.

AWARDS

TLS 38
PIGEON AWARD

For the Most Uses of "Like" and "You Know" in a 5 Minute Interview

Krystal Meyers

For the Most Vibrato Used on the Logan Show Since Kevin Max Appeared in 2005.

Downhere

For More Tattoos Than all Bands That Have Appeared on The Logan Show Combined.

Day of Fire

For Bringing Out the Most Home Schooled Audience Members of any Artist.

Carman

For the Most Songs Used in the Movie "The Departed"

Flatfoot56

For Making a 9 Minute Instrumental Performance Well Worth Watching.

Phil Keaggy

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SKIN DEEP

Today, more than ever, we hear Christian artists emphasize the importance of being "authentic" and "real." And sure enough, most acknowledge their songwriting has become more honest, open and vulnerable. (Music critics tend to agree.) But what about the way today's Christian artists market themselves visually? In a culture that still supports the notion that "image is everything," what does it mean to be authentic and real? Recording artist, songwriter and *CCM* contributing editor **NICHOLE NORDEMAN** decided for herself...it's time to come clean. Putting her cards on the table, she reached out to other artists to see if they can relate. You could say she got more than she bargained for...

Two years ago, I landed on the cover of *CCM* for the first time by myself. I wore a dress "borrowed" from Neiman Marcus, that I'm pretty sure cost three times my current monthly mortgage. To put it simply, it was the quintessential Cinderella dress. It was everything I've dreamt of being since I was 11 years old; and I flittered around in layer upon layer of that glorious shimmering, flowing, sweeping gown while the photographer snapped away. I had just been on this insanely stupid diet for months so that I could squeeze myself into the Cinderella getup, but one minute in that dress, and I knew that every shunned bagel had been worth it.

Hours later, the shoot ended; and I regretfully pulled on my Old Navy cargo pants, hopped into my pumpkin and headed home to my family where my 1-year-old son had decided to greet me with perhaps the most toxic diaper in the history of Huggies. Needless to say, the clock had struck midnight.

Awhile back, I asked *CCM* if I could write this story. I felt—still feel—uneasy about that photo shoot princess moment. Not because there's anything wrong with feeling momentarily flawless, but because that photo, and many like it, in no way represent my real life. I feel rather nauseous when I consider the young girl who sees that photo and has no idea that it took five hours and an entire team of makeup artists and stylists to make me look like a princess. She also has no idea that even after all that, somebody sat at a computer (with my enthusiastic blessing) and point and clicked away my acne scars, my 35-year-old wrinkles and the roll of flesh around my middle that makes me look like I am perpetually stuck in my second trimester.

This is an especially difficult scenario to stomach, since this same young girl will probably send me a heartfelt e-mail about how she appreciates how "real" I am...

So.

Armed with a guilty conscience and *CCM*'s permission, I was compelled to ask some other artists if they, too, might wrestle a bit with the irony that we are trying desperately, through our music, to point to the liberating love of Jesus

while packaging that music in a way that points to...well...us. **To be honest, I wasn't sure if anybody wanted to talk about that pressure. I feared silence.** I feared the Jerry McGuire office memo moment. Would my fellow artists talk about real life?

Thirteen interviews later, to say that they were honest is an understatement. I awkwardly asked for a couple inches and, miles later, was humbled by the transparency of my peers.

YOUTH OF A NATION

I continue to marvel at how the average age of a new artist gets younger and younger each year. I've chimed in with the cynics on many occasions, "What can you possibly say to the world when you're 16? I mean, are they going to write songs about how much it stinks to wear *braces*?"

I could tell after about 30 seconds of talking with **BETHANY DILLON**, now 18, that I had a lot to learn from her perspective. I've always admired her "jeans and T-shirt" sense of self, and yet she confesses to getting tripped up by some of the trimmings and trappings and the struggle to stay true to who she is, "...**people can smell a phony** and can tell when you're not wearing your own clothes and you're saying things that aren't really in your vocabulary. I mean, I'm human...and there's part of me that's like, 'Why can't I buy hundreds of dollars worth of makeup?' And I could...and in the back of my mind I feel like I couldn't pull that off for long. I have to learn now to be honest about the fact that I am a girl from the country in Ohio. I want to be feminine and all that, but the thing about me is that I just don't spend a lot of time putting myself together."

"Beautiful," the song that put her on the map in 2004, caught a lump in my throat the first time I heard the lyric, *"I want to hear you say/Who I am is quite enough,"* because I spend so much time feeling like I'm barely enough. Bethany speaks about freedom. "I think it is a gift to give a woman permission to be who she is... I don't have to do anything and I am so unable to impress God and, yet, there is something about *me* that has captured *Him*."

KRYSTAL MEYERS clearly understands the double standard. "I love fashion...love the magazines and have stacks of them. Love going shopping. Love finding new clothes, and it makes me feel excited to wear those new clothes." And yet a few minutes later, the 18-year-old sounds burdened. "**I don't want to be seen without makeup on because I don't feel as pretty without makeup on.** I hear from fans on my message board and they're like, 'You've got such clear and beautiful skin...how do you do it?' And I'm thinking to myself, well, that's photoshopped!"

I mention to her that most fans have no idea that the photos are fixed in any way, so they're at home wishing away for Krystal Meyers' skin, which doesn't really even exist. "We have problems with our weight and acne or just self-image in general. And being able to be honest and truthful about it... I think it's really important," explains Krystal.

Later, on the phone with **KIERRA "KIKI" SHEARD**, who's also 18, I am reminded of the pressures that her generation faces and how hard it is for the average teenager to wrestle with those pressures, even without the added stress of publicity pictures.

She shares openly about a time in her life when her self-confidence was at its lowest. "During the first album, I was dealing with low self-esteem because it was brought up to me, that 'You're kind of a big girl'...and that's something that I had to experience behind closed doors, and **not everybody knew I was wrestling with my self esteem.** It doesn't matter who you are; what people say is going to bother you just a tiny bit," she says.

A tiny bit?

I tell her about the first time it was gently suggested to me that I get a gym membership before my first photo shoot. Never mind the fact that I was busting my butt waiting tables and barely able to pay my rent while recording my first record. I was literally living off whatever the change in my car ashtray could get me from Taco Bell. Apparently, I was not short on change.

KiKi is quick to point out where she goes to find her confidence, "...knowing that I'm beautiful because I'm a child of God and He created me. *He* loves me. I feel like I went through that experience and it strengthened me. Being in the spotlight, people will find the worst things wrong with you after you've spent hours trying to put yourself together... People are going to try to criticize you."

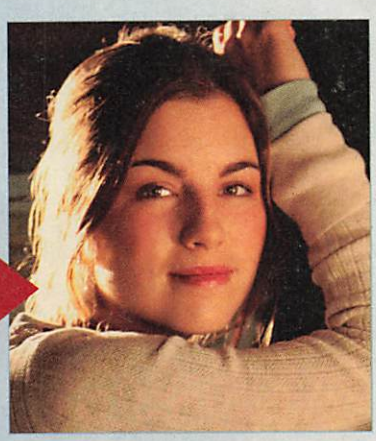
KiKi's father once reminded her, "If you are in leadership, you have to know that you are under a microscope of scrutiny."

THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW

From high school to highly fashionable...

"PEOPLE CAN SMELL A PHONY."

BETHANY DILLON



"I DON'T FEEL AS PRETTY WITHOUT MAKEUP ON."

KRYSTAL MEYERS

"I'M NOT A REAL ISHED PERSON."

SARA GROVES

"And that is something I will always keep in mind," she says.

A microscope of scrutiny. I guess I've considered that before as it relates to my character, but not my waistline.

THE REAL ME

In a woman's life there are few things, if any, that rival the title, "Mom." Initially motherhood feels like an awkward fit, but in time it feels more like the favorite sweater you refuse to take off despite the fact that it's unraveling in places and has a few choice stains. At times, there's an unspoken pressure to look like you are still the artist but never became the mom.

When I catch up with **NATALIE GRANT**, she is soon set to deliver twin girls. In the time it takes for you to sit down comfortably for 10 minutes and read this article on your favorite couch, Natalie will have changed her shirt three times from the chronic spit up that has taken over her life.

She has been vocal on the topic of self-image, coming clean about her own struggle with an eating disorder, and I ask her if being a part of an image-driven industry only compounds those issues. "It is a constant struggle," she admits, "**I have a daily choice to be healthy in my thoughts or destructive. I do not always make the right choice;** and because I have been so open about my struggle, sometimes I feel like a fraud. When GMA Week and Doves roll around, I find myself seeing people I love and admire, yet comparing myself. I notice how thin she is or what she is wearing, or how great her hair looks. I *hate* that about myself."

I smile. The last time I saw Natalie, I remember thinking about how thin she was and how I'd kill for that hair.

While image will always play a part in our industry, Natalie adds, "the responsibility lies with me to be transparent and open with myself and my audience. And definitely in my art, I have to let them see the real me. And while I still struggle with insecurities every day, I have found much strength in being real."

Even after 14 years, **HEATHER PAYNE** of **Point of Grace** still works to reconcile the pressures and demands of looking the part of an artist. They were college students when they were signed, and today they are wives and mothers. Heather questions whether image pressure might be somewhat self-imposed. "Now that we're older we don't feel the pressure from our record company, but we put it on ourselves. **We're just like anybody else who watches TV and movies and looks at magazines and sees all these people who are so unrealistic and so picture perfect**."

Heather continues, "I think our very first photo shoot was the most traumatic for all of us. It was the first time we had people scrutinizing the way we did something—the way we tilted our head, or smiled, or showed teeth or didn't show teeth, or did our hair." Then there's the issue of photoshop, which she likes to call "photo chop."

The POG ladies tour the country presenting Girls of Grace Conferences (**girlsofgrace.com**), making a point to spotlight real beauty for young girls and highlight the difference between what's "reality...and what a computer can do."

Heather elaborates, "Here I am—my hair's in a ponytail and I haven't had a shower today and I'm sitting with a broom in my hand. That is more reality than any kind of photo shoot. I'm just in that sloppy mommy phase. You know, I'm tired."

Later in the day, I catch a glance in the mirror of my own greasy ponytail, and it makes me want to hop on a plane and fly to Heather's house and help her sweep. We could be tired together.

Heather reminds me of Solomon's wise and wistful words in Ecclesiastes: "It's all vanity." She takes issue with the abuse of the term 'self-image' these days. "We hear that term so much...that it's all about self, self, self. We live in a me-driven society. Christians shouldn't be thinking about self-image; it's about God image. He set us apart."

WHY IT MATTERS

It is no surprise that **SARA GROVES** has valuable insight on the topic of image and authenticity. She references Donald Miller's book *Searching for God Knows What*, where he conducted an experiment at a Christian bookstore trying to find even one ugly person on the cover of a Christian

music CD and was unsuccessful. Donald writes, ***"I don't mean any of this to say that good-looking people are bad... I am only saying we are, perhaps, even more obsessed in the church with the stuff culture is obsessed with. We are hardly providing an alternative world view."***

Sara, like many others, speaks of the rude awakening for her that just making music wasn't quite enough. "I'm not a real polished person. I grew up as kind of a late-comer on knowing the (fashion) rules of things. Once I started to learn them, I was really self-conscious that I'd been breaking these rules for so long."

A teacher prior to being a recording artist at a major label, Sara wore prairie skirts and Mary Janes to school every day. "I felt this complete collision that what I had been doing was inadequate." She reminisces about the huge fight that she and her husband/manager had over the first photo shoot, "He was just trying to get me to change my look a little bit...and in a nice way...as my husband, and there's just no way that conversation was going to go well. Troy called [the label] and said, 'Cancel the flight. She's gone. She's left the house and I don't know where she is.' And I had. I had a long drive, and I just wondered how I was going to survive all these pressures. **My first GMA Week, I just about drowned in it. Having to dress for that was...ugh...crippling.** That first year I was really nervous about looking too old. I already had a job, and was a new mom, and at 25...I felt really old."

So how do we strike a balance? "Well, the gospel and marketing have always been uneasy for me and hard to reconcile. That's all the gloss, the marketing. It's hard for me because I feel that, at some level, the audience demands it, and they have an appetite," Sara says. "It's like MSG—they're so used to eating Doritos because they explode in their mouths."

I wonder to myself if the artists are the ones addicted to the Doritos.

Sara and I discuss how easy it is to point the finger at "the industry" when both of us have worked with countless creative people—makeup artists, stylists, art directors—all full of integrity and committed to honoring God with their gifts. We, the artists, can't possibly pass the buck quite that easily. She quotes John Fischer. "If Moses came down the mountain and found a statue of himself, would he have been so quick to burn it?"

STAINED-GLASS MASQUERADE

When I first felt compelled to write this story, my intention was to focus primarily on female artists. But if you've ever wandered around Nashville during GMA Week, you'll find that pound for pound in hair product, the guys give us a good run for our money. They are not immune to image issues.

I had a long chat with **BEBO NORMAN** who, before he married a few years ago, was known as Christian music's most eligible bachelor. Awkward, I've always thought, to be the focus of so much attention from so many overly enthusiastic, squealing college girls. I mean, the "Bebo fan" is kind of legendary. And while most guys have trouble conjuring up sympathy for that particular dilemma, I suspect that to be known for your 'adorableness' might be slightly frustrating when you happen to be an incredibly gifted writer and artist.

Did he ever feel like his credibility as a musician suffered? Bebo explains he feels partly responsible for drawing attention to his 'singleness' and partly manipulated by it. "I didn't expect every story and every interview I did for a number of years in my life...to be about being single. My goal, honestly, was to say, 'I'm a single man at this point and it is real life and I'm feeling lonely on the road.' But the weird thing is the loneliness became the story."

The artistic world can be uncomfortable for him. "I'm sort of an artist by mistake. I mean, I love to write songs, but I didn't naturally have an affinity for performing for people. Even the word 'artist' is such a lofty word. Most people with creativity have an extreme form of insecurity. I don't know any that I can think of off the top of my head that don't struggle with a pretty dramatic level of [it]."

Our conversation takes an unexpected turn and Bebo confesses that a couple years ago he almost walked away from it all. He grappled with some serious questions, "...is it even Christ-like in any way? I know it's Christ-like in the moment when someone's hearing a song...and God is using

"MOST PEOPLE W CREATIVITY HAVE AN EXTREME FO OF INSECURITY."

BEBO NORMAN

"THERE WAS ALWAYS THIS FEELING THAT 'I DIDN'T HAVE THAT LOOK THAT THEY ALL HAVE.'"

MARK HALL

"IF YOU ARE NOT AFFIRMED AS A YOUNG WOMAN, IT TENDS TO LEAVE ROOM FOR A NEED TO BE VALIDATED BY SOMEONE ELSE."

AYIESHA WOODS

"I LOOK AT MYSELF, AND I THINK OF EVERYTHING THAT'S WRONG."

SARAH KELLY

"IT'S ALL SMOKE AND MIRRORS"

AMY GRANT

CHRIS TOMLIN

"EVERYONE WAS COMING TO JOHN THE BAPTIST...SAYING, 'YOU'RE IT. YOU'RE THE DEAL...' AND HE RESPONDED, '...THERE'S ONE THAT'S COMING. I CAN'T EVEN TIE HIS SHOES...' I'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN IT."

that without question, but **there is this system in place. Am I completely wrong to even be a part of the system?**" He recalls a gig one night in Portland, Ore., "I was completely miserable on stage, and I sort of stepped back and called my manager and said, 'I just want to go home for a few months, and I may be done.' I realized that I had become a sort of caricature of myself. I had inflated all of the things I thought people liked to see, and I had deflated all of the things I didn't like about myself." Even his humility on stage (born out of genuine insecurity early on) became a "trained response." He explains, "I knew subconsciously that people would respond to that, and that's what I became."

"Being real" these days has, itself, become a marketing ploy, even if it began as a genuine and noble trait. How do we safeguard against those things? "I think it's not just honesty—it's brutal honesty," Bebo offers.

I toured with **Casting Crowns** last year and have a deep appreciation for how small the role of image seems to play in the lives and ministry of **MARK HALL** and the group's members. Even with that, Mark acknowledges that he felt a bit insecure early on about getting involved in the music industry. "**There was always this feeling that 'I didn't have that look that they all have.'**" He laughs about the first time he was on his way to a lunch meeting with some label executives. Once they laid eyes on him, he was fairly convinced they would say, "Ya know, Mark...you should...write."

I ask Mark about the danger of idolatry in Christian music and what we can do about it, if anything. And, he doesn't skip a beat. "I think the biggest thing is transparency, the songs where we connect with people and we're letting it show and saying we're still messed up. Those are the moments that everyone comes out saying, 'Hey, it's so comforting to know that there are other people dealing with this.' I know me well enough to know that I am not impressed with me. And someone being impressed with me...it's not going to fix them. They've got to understand that God is the only person who is going to change their lives," he explains.

WHERE THE PAST MEETS TODAY

Every time I hear **AYIESHA WOODS'** song "Happy" on the radio, I crank it. Sure, it's a great tune, but it just sounds so believable. She has a rare confidence in her delivery.

Ayiesha grew up in Bermuda, a small British colony and a cultural melting pot. She paints a phenomenal picture of a family whose shade of skin and eye color were as diverse as the United Nations. "All shades and colors and shapes and sizes and there's just an appreciation for who God made everyone to be," Ayiesha explains. "**If you are not affirmed as a young woman, it tends to leave room for a need to be validated by someone else.** To this day, I am my daddy's brown sugar, just having someone speaking life and allowing us to really love what God has created us to be inside and out...a lot of importance was placed on character."

She speaks comfortably about some of the tension she's already felt being marketed in a pop world and not a gospel one. She laughs about a recent industry event where her music was automatically placed in the Gospel category, "...an assumption based on the color of my skin." She doesn't sound offended, just amused at the inability of some to reconcile the way she looks with the way her music sounds. Again, I'm struck by her confidence. "I'm not trying to box God in," she explains. "At the end of the day, who is it that we are representing? It's Christ."

SARAH KELLY, Christian music's resident rocker chick feels equally as culpable when it comes to the topic of character and the ideals she represents. I ask her if she feels conflicted about the message that our CD covers are sending to a younger female audience. She acknowledges "being a woman, there are always 500,000 things you would change about yourself, and to nurture that by making this perception of perfection is just ridiculous."

For Sarah, "beauty is in the flaw." She tells me about a rather painful adolescence: "I used to get made fun of...my hair...in junior high...people would draw pictures and stick them to my locker. And my voice was the biggest deal. In the seventh grade, my choir teacher told me, 'Sarah, you're sticking out!' It all comes out...the beauty is in the flaw—the things that set us apart that are unique and our features that are sometimes made fun of. I mean, Cindy Crawford got made fun of...that mole..."

As a young girl, Sarah taped up a picture of Cindy Crawford on her mirror to try and copy her makeup because she thought they had the same coloring. We

laugh about that, until I suggest the possibility that there might be a young girl somewhere out there with a picture of Sarah Kelly taped up on her mirror doing the same thing. And she stops laughing. She's never considered it. All at once, Sarah sounds flustered and somewhat panicked at the possibility, "That's everything I don't stand for. I mean, my gosh, look at me, I'm a mess. If you're going to do that, pick someone better. **I look at myself, and I think of everything that's wrong**. I do not think I'm drop-dead gorgeous. I don't think I'm pretty to be honest with you."

Sarah tells me that the first thing she sees in the mirror is an "abnormal amount of lines under my eyes." Somebody pointed out these lines when she was 12-years-old, and now that's all she sees. "I've come through so much and I'm still standing and I love Jesus with all my heart. Those lines should be more like a testimony instead of something I'm trying to cover up," she explains.

SOUL CAGES

As someone who has battled with eating disorders, **REBECCA BARLOW** understands what can happen when your body becomes not a temple, but a prison of your own making. "I grew up in the church. I was a pastor's kid, and I think I began feeling this pressure in my life of having to be perfect." She struggled with anorexia, then bulimia and finally excessive exercise, "...just anything to make me feel better about myself." After so many empty attempts at filling the void, she came to the end of herself. "I was lying on my bathroom floor, and I was like, 'God, I pretty much want to die today. I don't know if You can fix me. I don't even know if You're real...but would You forgive me for destroying my body?' At that moment I felt Him in that room holding me and saying, 'Rebecca, you are destroying what I have made beautiful'...and it was like my eyes were open."

Do those demons still rear their ugly heads? Is recovering from an eating disorder in such an image-driven industry a little like being a recovering alcoholic and hanging out in a bar all the time? "I realize I'm always going to be in a battle, and it's easy for me to fall back into that pit," she adds. She names her relationship with her mom and her Bible as critical "guard rails."

How has BarlowGirl navigated the tricky waters of being imaged as Christian artists? A disastrous first photo shoot that resulted in the firing of the photographer and a decision to start over entirely was one of the best things that could have happened to them. Rebecca describes the tension between initially agreeing to being airbrushed and "stretched out" to look skinnier and the realization that "this is not God-honoring." "We were like, 'Wait a minute...we're talking about not conforming and yet we're doing exactly what everyone else is doing. We had to re-shoot—dressing ourselves, doing our own hair and our own makeup—the very first one."

I marvel at the wisdom in that, especially when the only thing I can recall about my first photo shoot was how stoked I was to get free new clothes. I remember being so profoundly grateful that I wasn't schlepping burgers and fries anymore. I probably would have happily worn a chicken suit.

As we wrap up our conversation, she shares that she is "fasting" makeup right now when she's not on stage...as in, not wearing any. She felt like it was playing too big a role in her life. I cringe at the thought. She explains, "If I'm speaking about image and I always look perfect, what is that saying? What does that tell our audience?"

That's the question that keeps nagging at me... What *does* it tell our audience?

Of all the artists I've spoken with, there is no one more familiar with tension between faith and art than **AMY GRANT**. As I dial her number, I wonder if she ever gets tired of being asked for the "seasoned veteran" perspective. Early in our conversation I marvel at how she has managed to escape being jaded. Instead, she thoughtfully reminisces about how the roles of image, beauty and authenticity have played themselves out since she signed a record deal as a 15-year-old.

"I remember when I was in high school feeling very gawky and my mom saying, 'Just be patient. The most beautiful years of a woman's life are between 35 and 45...just give yourself some time because what matters to you now will not matter then.' And she was right."

Amy's first photo shoot was really just a friend taking some pictures of her after school. "When I signed my first contract, I was deep in the throes of

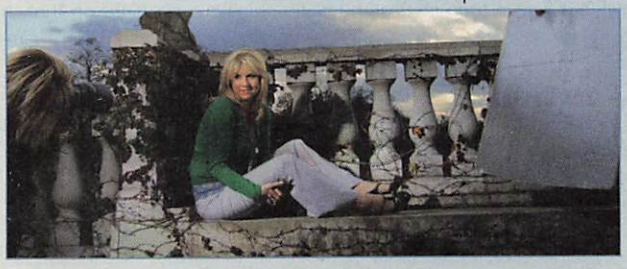
ANATOMY OF A PHOTO SHOOT

Nichole takes you behind the scenes and inside her head...

7:00 AM.
Starbucks makes everything more beautiful.

My choice of 3 inch heels... perfect for grocery shopping & play dates later

1 pm... fantasizing about lunch break... considering snacking on makeup brush if it gets too close to my mouth.



PHOTOS BY KATIE MOORE

the longest I've sat still since Charlie was born 3 years ago.

acne. I changed out of my (school) uniform and put on...I think it was like a blue jean jumper with a red and white checked shirt, and he took some pictures and that was it. No hair, no makeup."

Things are a little different today. "I mean, I grew up in an era where it was Janis Joplin, Mama Cass and Carole King. The people that were really the front-runners were not beauty queens—they were just good. **Music is a totally different thing now...it can't be just about music. It has to be young and beautiful, and I think that's really sad.** I think because I've been around so much airbrushing, I never read an article about anybody in the paper—positive or negative—and believe it. I never see a picture of anyone and say, 'that's how they really look,' because it's all smoke and mirrors. The whole lot."

Reflecting on a song by Sting called "The Soul Cages" Amy adds, "For awhile that's how I referred to my body. This is not really me; it's just my soul cage." Then she references some beauty advice written by Audrey Hepburn decades ago and taped above her kitchen window. It reads like a passage from Proverbs:

> **"For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.**
> **For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people.**
> **For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry.**
> **For beautiful hair, let a child run his or her fingers through it once a day.**
> **For poise, walk with the knowledge you'll never walk alone."—*Audrey Hepburn***

She leaves me with something difficult to chew on. "You know, we all live in a little pond compared to the big world. I think it's always important to say that my reality is a tiny piece of the picture. All the kids laid up in St. Jude's hospital are not worried about what the stylist did on that magazine cover, and at the Habitat [for Humanity] build nobody was concerned with an imaging problem. I think in a way, we can sort of take a microscope and say, 'Oh no! What are we doing here?' And in the big picture it does not matter."

A bit of a light bulb goes off as I consider the weight of her words. I am suddenly embarrassed when I think about how many hours I've spent talking to artists over the last four weeks about beauty and self-image and the selling of our selves. And I wonder suddenly, '*Does* it matter?' I feel momentarily insecure about my decision to even write this story... 'Who cares? So Christian artists care too much about how we look...big deal. (Meanwhile, in Sudan...)'

But as Amy elaborates, she sort of talks me off the ledge she just unknowingly pushed me out on. She continues, "...as each of us matures, we find ourselves going, 'I can't believe I let some of the goofiest stuff rob me of enjoying life.'" And I realize that she's talking about the gift of retrospect that usually grants us this luxury. It is the act of looking in the rearview mirror and watching those mountains disappear into mere speed bumps that give us grounded perspective.

I read back over the words of Amy's mother, 'What matters to you now will not matter to you then...' And I realize that the cultural preoccupation with self-image and the unbalanced way it seems to live in the Christian music industry is a *now* issue for me as much as I wish it was a *then* issue. And while shining a spotlight on that might only seek to draw more unnecessary attention, piles and pages of transcripts scattered across my desk remind me that spotlights not only showcase, they expose. And that an open dialogue has the potential to be less about chatter and might just be more about change. Does it matter? I spoke with 13 artists who think it does.

Does it matter to you?

Well?

Go ahead... We're listening. ccm

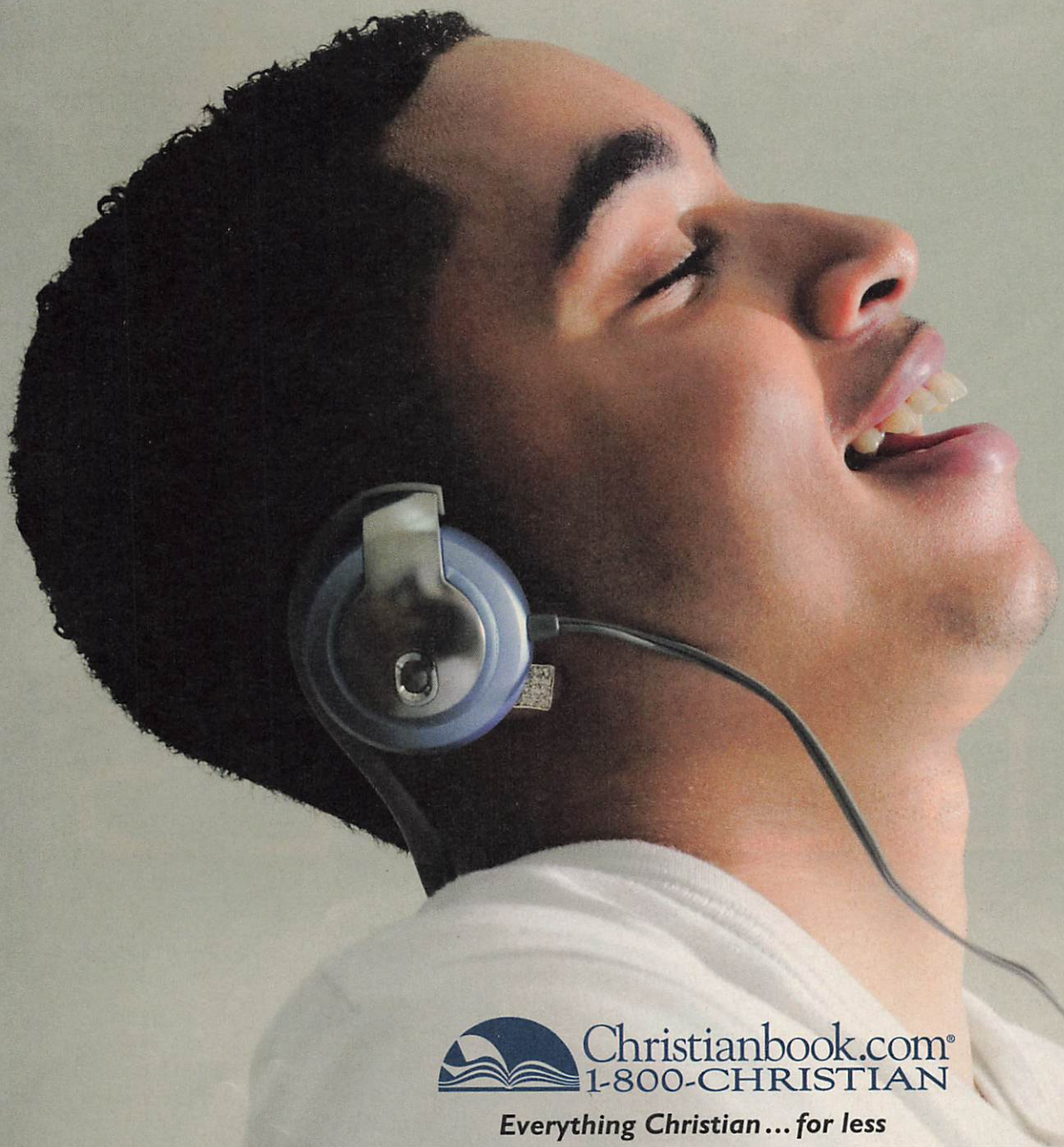
MADE TO WORSHIP WHO?

CHRIS TOMLIN, who has rocketed to the Christian music forefront in the last few years, and I spoke on the morning after the four-day Passion conference in Atlanta. He sounded exhausted but typically warm and willing to jump into the messy conversation about the gospel of good looks. The topic of image and authenticity gets even messier for the worship artist, whose very job is to be invisible, right? How does Chris reconcile the inescapable reality that his shiny happy photo is ever-present?

On the flight to his first photo shoot, Chris remembers opening a letter from Passion founder Louie Giglio and, to this day, meditating on the words he read. While Louie acknowledged the star treatment Chris was about to experience for the first time, he encouraged him to "think about John the Baptist all day."

"Everyone was coming to John the Baptist in John 3 and saying, 'You're it. You're the deal... You're getting quite popular here.' And he responded, 'I am not...there's One that's coming. **I can't even tie His shoes**. That's the One you need to go to. And when you see Him, you're going to know that He must increase and I must decrease.'" Louie's letter continued, "And as they're taking your pictures today, I just want you to hold that in your heart... 'you don't even tie this guy's shoes.' I've never forgotten it," Chris says. N.N.

Even the Prices Are Music to Your Ears.



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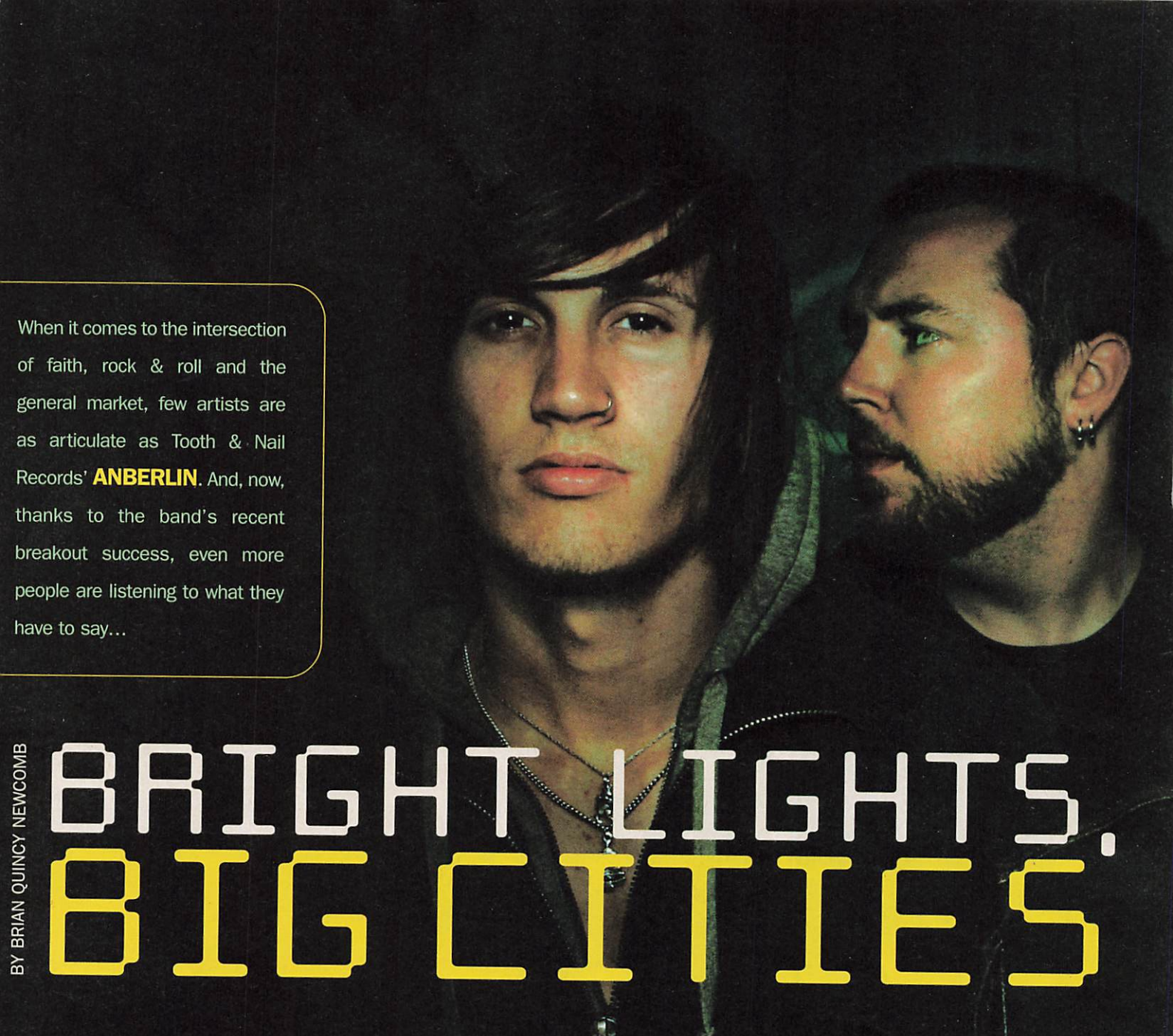


When it comes to the intersection of faith, rock & roll and the general market, few artists are as articulate as Tooth & Nail Records' **ANBERLIN**. And, now, thanks to the band's recent breakout success, even more people are listening to what they have to say...

BY BRIAN QUINCY NEWCOMB

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITIES

"The entire time we were making *Cities* I couldn't stop thinking about how excited I was for the world to hear it," says producer Aaron Sprinkle (MxPx, Hawk Nelson). The world indeed. Sprinkle's recent collaboration with Winter Haven, Florida's Anberlin has resulted in one of this year's first breakout albums. As he puts it, the band "took their unstoppable approach to rock & roll to the next level," and adds, "I feel very privileged to have been a part of it."

No doubt, the gratefulness abounds, extending far beyond the five-star producer. Beyond the album's muscular artistry, there's the little fact that *Cities* debuted in February at No. 19 on the *Billboard 200* sales chart by selling more than 33,500 copies its first week out.

Make no mistake, though, this is no overnight success story.

GODSPEED

Talking by phone just two weeks prior to the release of *Cities*, singer/lyricist Stephen Christian admits that, while the past five years have been full, they have flown by. "It went like a whirlwind from the beginning," he says.

"We formed Anberlin in early 2002, out of the ashes of several local bands here in the Tampa and Orlando area, and by that summer we had a contract with Tooth & Nail Records—we got signed one month after I graduated from college."

Christian graduated with a degree in psychology, which he says still comes in handy, but admits he really wanted to make music for a living. "We got together, more or less the four of us, because we really wanted to take music not only seriously, but we wanted to develop it as a career. We quit our day jobs, and headed out on the road. I set aside the idea of looking for a job to focus on music."

While Anberlin has had a bit of a revolving door in the rhythm guitar department, Christian says that working with his friends Joseph Milligan (guitar/music composer), Deon Rexroat (bass) and Nathan Young (drums) has created a surrogate family. "The four of us have been playing together so long, there's a cohesiveness on stage and off," he says. "It's been amazing; they're more than bandmates, and more like brothers."

The band earned major label interest almost immediately, but eventually settled on working with the indie alternative label known to work with artistic

Christians both in and beyond the faith-based marketplace, because it seemed to trust the band's ability to create good songs from the get go.

"We went up to Matt Goldman's (Underoath, Copeland) studio in Atlanta, Georgia and had him do our demos," says Christian. "He said, 'These are good,' and sent them to a friend at Warner Brothers Records, and that spread the word to other labels. Once we got the contract offers to look at, we realized that Tooth & Nail actually gave us the better offer. A lot of the major labels were offering development contracts, so there was not much to them. Tooth & Nail offered us something better, and two of our favorite bands, The Juliana Theory and Further Seems Forever, were there, so it didn't take long before we were signed to Tooth & Nail."

Within a year of forming, they released *Blueprints for the Black Market*, a fun power pop album that delivers what one could expect from players who Christian explains grew up "into The Smiths, The Cure, Depeche Mode, the full '80s battery of pop and alternative influences." As the band's sound broadened and gained depth across the length of two more discs you can hear melodic growth in a singer who marks the late Jeff Buckley as his greatest musical inspiration.

THE UNDEVELOPED STORY

Now seasoned by four years of constant touring, Christian admits that t were originally signed more for their songs than for their performance. In fa "one of the label staff came and saw us play, and called [founder/preside Brandon Ebel to tell him not to sign us. But he liked the songs enough t he didn't care what we looked like on stage at that point. He didn't care ab the performance; he wanted us for the music, and I'm glad he took a risk us. But the reason we were signed was definitely the songs."

Recalls Ebel, "I had a good feeling about Anberlin from the minute started pursuing them. Initially, despite what some would consider 'unpolished' live show, the band had all the key elements in place: gr songs, high energy, excellent work ethic and awesome attitudes.

"As expected, their live show quickly developed, and now they are a fo on stage..."

"We've come together as a live band on the road," affirms Christian he considers the arduous tour schedule that found him and his bandma on the road 225 nights a year. "We've been on some great tours," he s with gratitude.

Those tours have included some of the hottest bands working—My Chemical Romance, Fall Out Boy, Story of the Year, Yellowcard and Hawthorne Heights. That exposure, combined with major radio airplay, helped the band sell more than 150,000 copies of its second album, 2005's *Never Take Friendship Personal*. The disc boasted two popular singles, "A Day Late" and "Paperthin Hymn" which landed substantial airplay at alternative rock radio. ("Paperthin Hymn" actually became a Top 40 hit on *Billboard*'s Modern Rock radio charts.)

A WHISPER & A CLAMOR

Signing to Tooth & Nail, and creating the kind of redemptive pop that explores spiritual issues without preaching or proselytizing, has created confusion in the minds of some as to whether Anberlin is a "Christian" band. As an individual, Christian is quick to share his faith throughout our interview, but when it comes to labeling his band and his music, he grows cautious.

"I'm proud of my faith, and I'm proud to be a Christian," the singer explains, "but I don't want my faith to be used as a marketing ploy. I don't think I should put Jesus' name on a record with the idea that I could sell more, anymore than I could leave it off to sell records. I'm exuberant about Jesus Christ, but I know that there are people, whether they are in marketing or media, who are going to say, 'Ah, I can now sell this product,' 'I can finally put this on my radio station,' now that they've named Jesus. If I knew I sold a record because I exploited my Lord and Savior, that, to me, sounds sacrilegious. When you market something as a 'Christian' product, you are walking a fine line.

"Using the name of Jesus to identify and, therefore, market and sell a product comes awfully close to using the name of God in vain," Christian explains. "Still, we get hate mail from Christians who want to call us out because we played in some club 'that is best suited for a crack junkie' or play with bands that are demonic,' which, in our experience, has been nothing of the sort. It's hard when you get that kind of criticism from other Christian people, so my manager keeps that kind of mail away from me—it's so disheartening. Jesus said a prophet isn't appreciated in his own hometown, and Jesus was criticized for places that He went to eat and who He ate with. If we're all the body of Christ, I know that I am the feet, and I'm going to go out and tread where other people are less likely to go. But, as a Christian, I make our music to connect with anyone who will listen, but we're not in the market as Christians, but as musicians."

LOVE SONG

Christian tells this story to drive home his point: "I went to New Orleans to help out during Mardi Gras about four years ago, and it turned out that there were a lot more homeless [people] on the streets than I had ever imagined. So we got together some sandwiches and socks and took them out to share them with some of these gutter-punks and help meet some of their most pressing needs. I asked them why they weren't Christians, and one of the kids pointed to a sign by two street-preachers with blow-horns that read 'Liars and homosexuals are going to Hell.' I was embarrassed to think that these preachers and I share the same faith—what they were saying was not grace; it was not loving. I think a better sign would have been 'No matter who you are, or what you've done, I still love you.' That's a message that I want to be associated with."

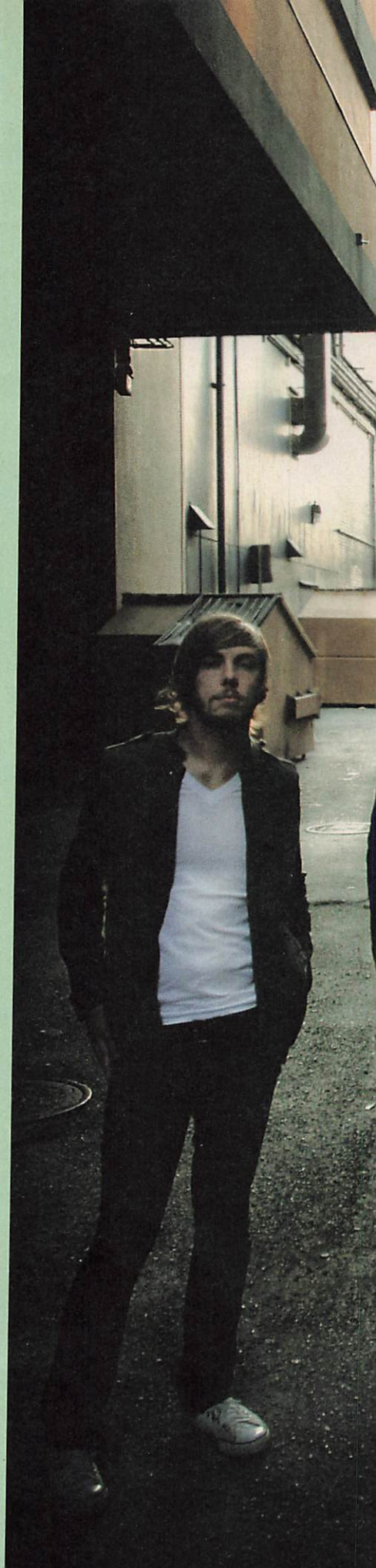
When it comes to Christian, and apparently his bandmates, what you see is what you get. Ask Josh Head, the keyboardist for Emery, about them, and the first thing he wants to talk about is their character. "Anberlin are like brothers to me…They're amazing people," he says right off the bat. "Their heart for people shows by the things they do, both with the band and outside of it."

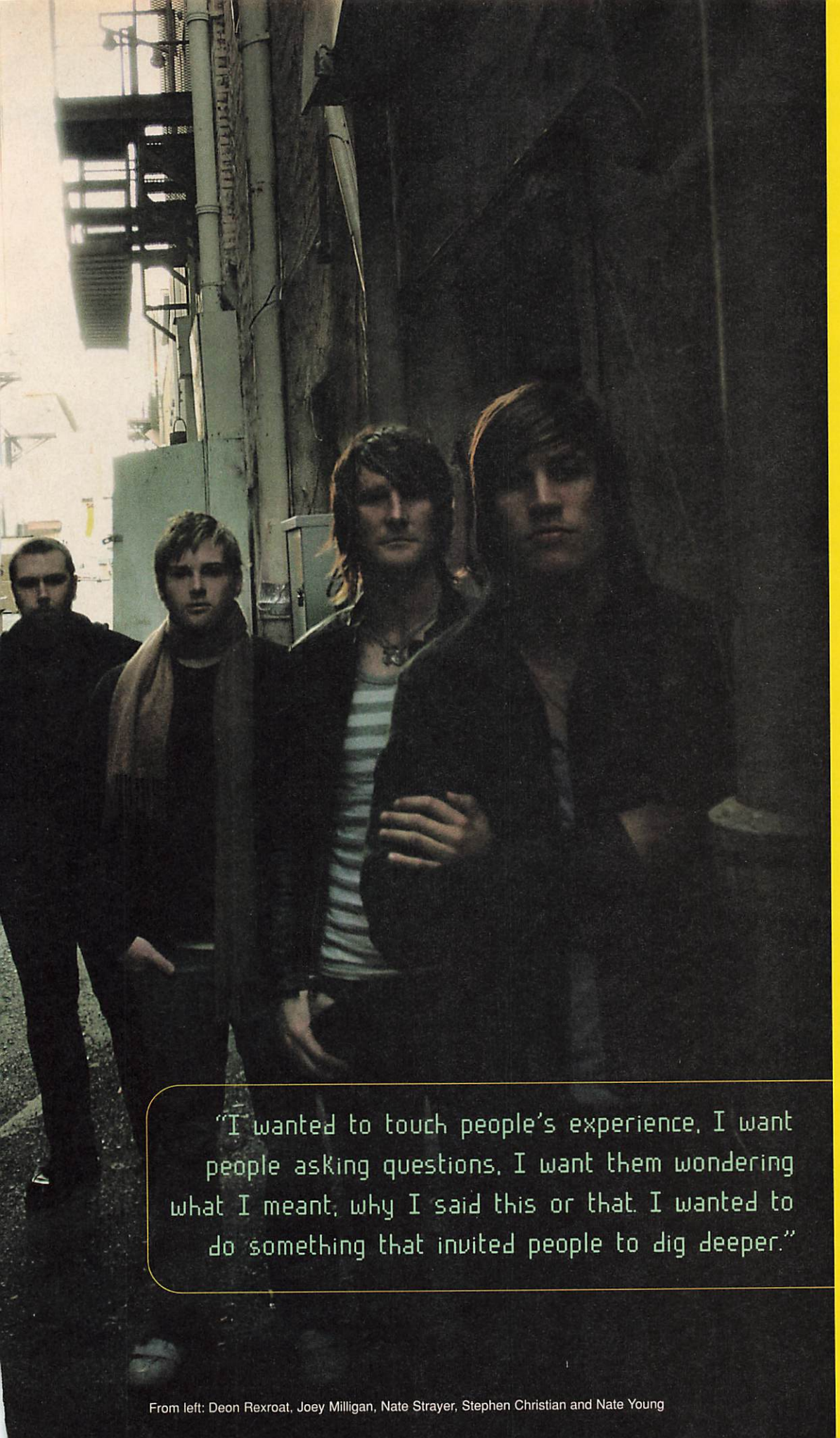
Love—the message that Christian wants "to be associated with"—is found throughout Anberlin's new disc.

In the song, "The Unwinding Cable Car," Christian sings of *"the correlation of salvation and love,"* and promises *"with quiet words, I'll lead you in."* Asked what his songs address on *Cities*, Christian is clear: "Life, really. On this record, I had an overall theme. It came from a quote [attributed to author Henri Nouwen] that 'solitude is the furnace of transformation.' It's an autobiography of life lessons."

And, while it's personal, Christian knows that these are common experiences. "All of us are going to go through these kinds of things at one time or another. We will know depression; we will have unanswered questions. It's a universal path that all of us will take. And I knew that going in to the record. I knew that starting out before I wrote the first lyric. I wanted to touch people's experience. I want people asking questions. I want them wondering what I meant, why I said this or that. I wanted to do something that invited people to dig deeper."

The disc closes with the song, "Fin," wherein he quotes the Epistle of James' concern for "widows and orphans," which Christian says puts our life and work in perspective. "It reminds us that our ministry to take care of the vulnerable and the weakest among us is something we're all called to do. We need to get back to love and grace and acceptance." ccm





"I wanted to touch people's experience. I want people asking questions. I want them wondering what I meant, why I said this or that. I wanted to do something that invited people to dig deeper."

From left: Deon Rexroat, Joey Milligan, Nate Strayer, Stephen Christian and Nate Young

ROCK CITY

Anberlin's recent emergence supports the old adage that "success breeds more success." The fun started when *Cities* crashed the sales charts party in February, reportedly marking "the second highest CD debut for a Tooth & Nail artist"—*ever.* No sooner had Anberlin made the initial splash, than the band streamed the new album in its entirety on MySpace, logging more than half a million hits in two days. Then it was announced the boys would be making their late night television debut, performing *Cities*' lead single, "Godspeed," on CBS' "The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson" in early March. AOL Music followed up by inviting Anberlin to perform three acoustic songs on its show "Sessions." And by the time you read this, *CCM*'s Chris Well will have undoubtedly added the most recent Anberlin moments to his "Sightings" blog at **myCCM.org/chriswell/blog**.

Amidst all the hoopla, the band is remaining as fan-focused as ever. Consider the new Anberlin "City Pass Contest." Every person who buys the new *Cities* album can have a shot at winning one of a slew of prizes, including an Xbox 360, a 30 GB video iPod, a Sony PSP, a custom Anberlin Epiphone guitar as well as a—*get this*—new 2007 Volkswagon Rabbit, among various other prizes. Fans who buy the album can enter the contest by going online to **anberlincities.com**, clicking on the "City Pass" icon, then entering the unique "City Pass" code found inside their CD and filling out the online entry form. The contest ends August 31. For more info, visit the contest website. ***J.S.***

FLAME: Man on Fire

Cross Movement Records artist FLAME is living proof that redemptive hip-hop—both the music and community—is a life changing reality. BY ANDREE FARIAS

There's something about hip-hop music and superlatives: the best-selling rap artist; the emcee with the smoothest flow; the producer with the hottest beats; the biggest platinum chain.

Christian hip-hop isn't nearly as concerned with these things, but if it were, The Cross Movement would run away with the title of "most evangelistic group in hip-hop." Hands down.

Not only is the Philadelphia collective continuing to "draw all men (and women) unto God" and itself, other rappers are nurturing personal relationships with Christ because of The Cross Movement, too.

Up-and-comer FLAME is one of them. Like colleagues Da' T.R.U.T.H. and Lecrae before him, the St. Louis native is also a Cross Movement disciple—musically, spiritually and otherwise—but not before a period of soul searching of his own.

"If I had one word for my life without God, it would be 'confusion,'" says FLAME, who had no idea about Christian rap at the time. "I met Christ after my grandmother passed away in 1998. That helped me get back into church."

His awakening to faith-based hip-hop came two years later, in 2000, while browsing the aisles of his local Christian bookstore, where he came across *House of Representatives*—his unofficial introduction to The Cross Movement. A fan was born.

The crew's work motivated FLAME to write and record his own raps. Little did he know that his humble, low-budget recordings would one day end up in the very hands of Cross Movement members Tru-Life and The Dash during a Chicago gig. At first the rapper was hesitant to pass the album along—after all, he was there to have a good time, not to hustle his CD around—but after a little prodding from his friends, he broke down.

"It was like meeting your heroes almost," he says of the experience, which also happened to be his first-ever Christian rap concert.

Barely a week had passed by when he got a call from his heroes themselves. It wasn't a call to ask him to sign on the dotted line and join the Cross Movement family—not yet, at least—but to encourage him to stay strong in the Lord and foster his walk with Him.

The phone calls between FLAME and the CM camp continued for a year, until the conglomerate felt strong enough about the emcee to give him an opening slot on the "Platinum Souls Tour." He didn't have an actual album to sell, but he didn't care—he was in rap heaven.

This period of accountability led to his first two albums, *Flame* (2004) and *Rewind* (2005), two albums whose fiery rhythms and incendiary rhymes fit snugly in the Cross Movement canon. The real stunner, though, is this month's *Our World: Fallen*, a concept album where FLAME ponders the world's need for a Savior, all the while raising the bar for his craft on every front possible. "The album is a passionate, but basic, explanation of God's pursuit for His created people," he says. "It's very simple, but it's a very informative appeal for people to run to Christ." ccm

ALMOST FAMOUS

AARON GILLESPIE MAY BE ONE OF THE MOST RECOGNIZABLE—AND BUSY—MEMBERS OF HARDCORE GIANT **UNDEROATH**, BUT THAT HASN'T STOPPED HIM FROM PURSUING DOUBLE DUTY AS THE FRONT MAN FOR HIS OWN NEW PROJECT. **BY DOUG VAN PELT**

One of the distinctive factors that gives Underoath an edge in the post-hardcore scene the band is excelling in has to be the clean, melodic counterpart vocals that drummer Aaron Gillespie brings to his front man (Spencer Chamberlain)'s aggressive, full-tilt screaming. It's certainly a winning formula, but Gillespie's strong tenor is so good, in fact, that it begs for more attention. Cue a solo album to answer that call. Not just a solo side-project, though; The Almost is touring with a full band that promises to perform live in between the higher priority of Gillespie's Underoath obligations. The Almost's debut album, a finely-crafted melodic rocker called *Southern Weather* (Tooth & Nail/Virgin), hits stores on April 3.

Count on music that's in the same neighborhood as Underoath, but much simpler and subservient to the kind of big melodies and choruses that'll make people want to sing along. "I really wanted to have an outlet that was more pop as opposed to heavy," admits Gillespie.

For the album's lyrical punch, Gillespie takes honesty as his most common theme, reflective of real-time emotions taken out of a daily journal or something. In "Dirty and Left Out"—a song which features guest vocals from Jeremy Enigk (Sunny Day Real Estate, The Fire Theft), he confesses, *"I've been dirtier than you wanna know."* In "Amazing, Because It Is," he turns the classic hymn "Amazing Grace" ever so slightly to paint his own portrait: *"I'm the type of person who lets fear drive…Cause I'm addicted, I'm needy, I'm lost without You/I need You."*

While most screamo acts like Underoath capture radio airplay and get the most crowd participation when they let their front man sing, they usually spend most of their time indulging in the kind of guitar slinging and intense metallic riffing that can get band members bloodied and bruised during a show. The Almost will certainly lay into real rock rhythms, but the band pulls up short of out-of-control screaming. Gillespie loves both styles, and sees The Almost as simply exercising the same rock muscles, but just a little differently.

With no album out and pretty much only Underoath fans knowing about the existence of Gillespie's new band, The Almost headed out for 20-plus dates in January. The turnout was surprisingly strong. "It was a really cool experience to see that people cared," he says. "They came out and even paid attention. I feel really blessed to be able to do it."

While anyone who's tried to sing and play drums at the same time will admit that it's hard, Gillespie found himself facing a similarly challenging task early on when it came to the adjustment of singing with just a microphone in hand and not drumsticks. Now that he has the perspective of hindsight, he knows what it's like to stand alone without a massive drum kit between him and the audience. "It's not as different as I'd assumed it would be. I thought it would be weirder than it was. I really miss playing drums; but, at the same time, I always had a microphone with Underoath, so I'm used to addressing people and singing and whatnot, so I think that kind of eased over the transition a little bit. It's a little odd, but fun."

Not only did this first tour prove to Gillespie that he could successfully maneuver the transition, but it was a real litmus test to see if The Almost could hang as a band. "The record wasn't done with a band," he explains. "It was done with me. So, it was kind of a test to see if we could even pull it off. I didn't know what was going to happen, but it came out great. I've got some really rad dudes playing with me."

With a supportive cast around him in both bands, The Almost is poised to do remarkably well. He promises that Underoath is still his main band and reports that "the guys in Underoath have been really cool about it," but it's surely going to take all the energy that his upbeat songs can muster to fulfill the busy roles of both. ccm

IS THE PEN MIGHTIER THAN THE ELECTRIC GUITAR? *CCM* EYES THE LATEST TRENDS...

FREEDOM Writers

BY LIZZA CONNOR BOWEN

If you're a fan of singer/songwriters—or adult contemporary music in general—chances are last year's band-soaked landscape left you onging for new music. Exactly one year ago, *CCM* eported that of the 40-plus nationally distributed lebuts on the books between April and the end of 2006, only *four* new acts would qualify for the AC op bin. The vast majority of record label signees vere bands—primarily rock bands.

While 2006 may have been yet another year of ock (see "Crank Up the AC" sidebar), if you fast-orward to the present, there are plenty of reasons or fans of AC pop to be optimistic. Consider the urrent release schedules. Adult Contemporary aves Nicole C. Mullen and Bethany Dillon, among thers, are up with Natalie Grant right around the orner. And the winds of change coming from the eneral market would indicate that singer/ongwriters are the fortunate ones on the upswing. t press time, iTunes' top downloaded albums ncluded John Mayer, Corinne Bailey Rae, Norah Jones and Lucinda Williams. Even the "it" bands, such as The Fray or Snow Patrol, are "pretty singer/songwriter driven," notes Word Publishing's vice president Chad Segura.

Christian music should, after all, be culturally relevant; and it often takes its cue from the sonic climate of the mainstream. But most of the solo artists interviewed for this article were admittedly not in tune with the trends. Beach Street Records act John Waller says he stopped following them while he was recording *The Blessing* last year. Folks warned him of what could be an uphill climb in a band-dominated environment.

Matthew West says he felt a similar chill several years ago when the industry was on the cusp of the band explosion. "I was approached by labels who said, 'We're not sure you're strong enough as a solo artist, but the industry really needs a Blink 182.' Or they would ask me to join a band they were putting together," he recalls. West says the vision for what God was calling him to was tested. But because he stuck with his creative guns, he now enjoys a career as a recording artist and songwriter because "someone took a chance on me even though I wasn't the current, trendy, polished package of the day," he says.

Like West, Waller ploughed ahead with his original vision. He considered the path of label mate and Dove Award-winning "Songwriter of the Year" Mark Hall (Casting Crowns). "People said, 'He's too old, and he's a youth pastor.' But it boils down to the fact that God did it," says Waller. "He prepared a man for 34 years of his life, and he had something to say. He had an incredible voice to say it with. Casting Crowns' success didn't have anything to do with what was in or out in the industry at that time."

If the tide is turning in favor of these solo troubadours, Segura says he does not anticipate that bands will go out of style anytime soon. He believes the industry is in a process of leveling. "If you look at what has been happening on mainstream radio and

SARAGROVES, on penning the "hit" single:

A conversation I am having with my label and other artists is that we are very much album-oriented songwriters, but the industry is moving to a single-song format. When I write for any album, I'm trying to look at an issue from many different angles. Now the emphasis is on one song, not the album. It is getting harder to sell whole albums when you can download the one song you like. Radio has always been all about the single as well. But radio used to lead people to buy the album. Usually the whole album makes up a story. Personally, I like to get the whole work of art so I can feel the weight of that season in the songwriter's life.

BEBONORMAN, on co-writing:

I don't necessarily know what trend might be happening, but for someone like me who has always written alone, it's been exciting to experiment with co-writing. You create something you wouldn't on your own. Those [co-written] songs seem to be the most exciting things that are coming out of the songwriters I know. I've been writing for 16 years now; and when you live and breath music, it is harder and harder to be inspired when the passion becomes your job. The attempt to write with other people has been my effort to keep music and songwriting a passionate process.

MATTHEWWEST, on the expanding digital opportunities:

I've been talking with my record label about this; and it seems that because of iTunes and the Internet, consumers have a greater capacity to consume more music from their favorite artists more often. It used to frustrate me that I would record 11 songs and put them on an album every 12 to 18 months. What about the other 80 songs I had written throughout the year? There are a lot of songs from artists that never see the light of day because they couldn't find a way to make them fit on the record. Thanks to places like iTunes, there is a place for those songs. I look at the Internet, iTunes and MySpace as potential outlets to enhance [what I am doing]. In any profession, you have to look at the state of affairs and embrace what's going on. If you're going to stay involved in the music industry, you have to adapt and engage with it.

MARKSCHULTZ, on the future:

I have always been more of a radio listener than an album buyer, so I am inclined to try to write songs that I could hear as a single on the radio. I have noticed though that about seven years ago you could have as many as four—maybe more—songs off a record played on the radio during the lifespan of that record. Now, with the change in charting, you might be lucky to have two. Singer/songwriters put in so much time and effort writing for a whole album, but more and more people now will only download "the hit." I think we are probably heading toward a time when the singer/songwriter just puts out three or four songs to download every few months.

JOHNWALLER, on compelling song content:

The only reason I will have a place in the industry is because I know who I am now, and I have something to say that people need to hear. I think I have something to say that will benefit people's lives, and I have a message they will cling to. I hope they'll say, "Hey, that's me, too." There is so much stuff out there—so many solo artists, bands and songs going for adds at radio—and what makes one different? It's got to be what you're saying that really pierces people's hearts. When I became a worship pastor of a church, I learned about some of the things people need to hear. I learned to use my gifts to add to that, rather than writing songs that were just hook-driven. When you get your eyes off of writing songs for the Kingdom and for the greater good of the body of Christ, then you lose something.

[with] album sales over the past few years, there has been a huge urban thing going on. Meanwhile, Christian music has gone deeper and deeper into the band trend. [The band trend] had happened in the mainstream and is still happening, but it is not the predominant force anymore," he says.

Segura notes the prime opportunity for solo artists, specifically those of the female persuasion, in the coming year, especially considering the success of male counterparts such as Chris Tomlin and Aaron Shust. EMI Christian Music Group's vice president of A&R, Brad O'Donnell, concurs. He adds that considering any ebb and flow of musical taste, the singer/songwriter is a timeless icon in the culture of music. "I think people connect with the music of singer/songwriters because, hopefully, it's honest. They tend to play songs they have written, so there's an authenticity that I think now, more than ever, people are looking for in the music they buy and listen to," he says.

crank up the AC

Christian music's 2006 year-end sales chart revealed that—on the heels of country music star Alan Jackson's gospel record—it was a rock act, Flyleaf, who took the lead spot. No surprises there. After all, rock has been king for more than a few years now. Yet, according to SoundScan's sales tracking, AC/Pop was the year's most popular genre in Christian music.

Come again? Exactly.

A closer look sheds light on the curious report. SoundScan's year-end sales charts include one chart that specifically ranks Christian AC albums. This chart reveals that eight of the top 20-selling projects classified as "AC" by SoundScan were actually recorded by rock artists, including Third Day, Jeremy Camp, Mat Kearney, newsboys and Jars of Clay. (The latest albums by Superchick and Plumb are also classified by SoundScan as AC.) Go figure... ***J.S.***

writeofway

While singer/songwriters are basking in the spotlight on the mainstream side, Christian music is preparing for the arrival of three key discs on April 3. That's the day the new albums from AC pop powerhouse Nicole C. Mullen (*ShareCropper's Seed*), pensive acoustic thrush Bethany Dillon (*Waking Up*) and pop/rock worship songstress Vicky Beeching (*Painting The Invisible*) hit stores. Fellow singer/songwriter (and music journalist) LIZZA CONNOR BOWEN connected with each artist recently to explore their headspace.

Some might call the renewed interest in singer/songwriter fare just the natural swing of the pendulum. The year 2007 looks promising for this creative pack given that the band craze of recent years seems to have plateaued.

From the outset, solo acts bring much to the table. As a self-contained unit, the artist/writer can hit the touring circuit armed with a guitar and a bag of songs. Record labels relish the fact that there is only one mouth to feed, one hotel room to reserve and one flight to book. Managers aren't wasting time mediating internal band disputes. Decision-making is streamlined when the approval of one, rather than a majority, is sought. Songwriting happens when the muse descends, or whenever the artist deems necessary.

Ah, the charmed existence of the singer/songwriter. Right? *CCM Magazine* talks with Nicole C. Mullen, Bethany Dillon and Vicky Beeching about the winding road of the writing life—the challenges that arise with their solitary status and the things that inspire and compel them to pick up their pens.

NICOLE C. MULLEN

CCM: ***What is the biggest challenge you face as a songwriter these days?***
Nicole: The challenge is finding the time. A lot of my songwriting is done in the car or late at night after all four of my children have gone to bed. It's done in the bus or the airplane or wherever I can find a quiet spot to think and to spill it out on the page. Even though I may have more [time] challenges today as opposed to when I started out, I think of my marriage, my children, my involvement in community ministry as seasoning that's applied to the writing. I have to work harder at finding those moments, but it makes me take it more seriously when I have it.

CCM: ***What has been the biggest growing pain for you to get through in your writing?***
Nicole: Years ago, my husband challenged me. He would say of some songs, "That is good, but it's not great yet." And it hit me that a lot of the things we give God glory for may not even be glory-worthy yet. Every time I read the Scripture about being "skilled and anointed," it presents the challenge for me to strive to be as skilled as possible and, at the same time, depending on the Lord to provide the anointing over that work.

CCM: ***How do you measure "skilled and anointed" in a song structure?***
Nicole: If I have to explain my lyrics to the listener, if the listener can't comprehend what I am trying to say, I've missed the mark. My litmus test is this: "Is this song hitting the heart of the listener, and does it have the power to change lives?" If so, then I chase after being skilled and anointed.

CCM: ***Who are you writing songs for?***
Nicole: If I can picture the faces of people who sit in my audience, that always helps me to deliver the song in a clear fashion because I have conversed with those people. After the concerts, I hear their stories and hug their necks, and that inspires me to say, "Lord, give me the right words to encourage them."

CCM: ***How would you describe yourself as a songwriter?***
Nicole: I am very slow, or shall we say, deliberate. I'm always a bit insecure when it comes to writing. It's like revealing your heart. You have to be extremely vulnerable to let somebody hear what's really going on inside of you. The first time I play any song for someone, I have this shyness that comes on. I worry they won't like it.

CCM: ***You don't co-write very often. Why is that?***
Nicole: It's not because I think other writers don't have good ideas. But when you're writing, you have to put out nine bad ideas to get that 10th great idea. For me, it's easier to stay in my head and work it out on paper. And given my schedule, who is going to get up at 2 a.m. to write a song with me? Who is going to be in my car 24-7 when I'm talking through an idea and into my tape recorder?

CCM: ***Given your broad interests, have you considered doing something besides writing songs?***
Nicole: At the beginning of 2006, I was asking the Lord if my time was up. There were so many things I wanted to do. My pastor said this: "If you have a vocation, then you can quit. But you can't quit a calling." I had to say, "Lord, You have called me to this; and I don't know what the future is going to hold, but You haven't given me the release to quit. When it's time for me to do something else, it's up to You to give me a new assignment because I answer to You." And if He doesn't give me a new assignment, I have to be faithful in the one He's called me to currently. And, so far so good. When I put on this hat [of solo artist] again, God gave me the peace, the fortitude and the strength to do it again.

BETHANY DILLON

CCM: ***You've just finished writing for a new record. Are you creatively exhausted or on a roll?***
Bethany: After writing for each of the past two records, I felt like someone who had run a marathon. But with *Waking Up* (Sparrow), it wasn't as much of a labor. Writing songs is more of a natural thing now. And since the record is finished, I've written a lot more because the filter is gone.

CCM: ***Considering a record usually has only 10 or 11 slots, what does that filtering process look like?***
Bethany: At the beginning of writing for a record, I am free to write what's on my heart. The way my A&R representative, Brad O'Donnell, has explained it to me is that we need to make sure the CD has every "food group" so there isn't an imbalance of songs. You don't want a bunch of slow songs or similar chord progressions or subject matter. The filtering process begins when I have about five to seven songs written for the record. I may still have things to say, but I have to be aware that I need to write a song that's more up-tempo or another ballad.

CCM: ***When you released your second record,* Imagination, CCM *put you on the cover with this headline: "Who is Bethany Dillon? The Future." How did that make you feel?***
Bethany: When that issue came to my house it was passed around, and everyone had a good chuckle. I'm just Beth from Ohio. I spend most of my days off unloading the dishwasher and babysitting. That whole article was very generous. I'm thankful for the voices of my family and the Lord in my life. I know that the Lord is constantly in a really good sense of humor, reminding me how much of a mess I am and proving to me that He can do this without me. I'm honored to be part of it.

CCM: ***Do you feel pressure to meet expectations from an industry that is constantly comparing you to heavyweight songwriters like Amy Grant?***
Bethany: It would be dishonest to say that I haven't felt pressure, but there is pressure in any job.

CCM: ***How do you cope with that pressure?***
Bethany: In this season of my life, there is a deeper sense of dependency on the Lord than there ever has been. Now I realize that I have to submit to vehicles like record labels and management companies, and I know that these things are not going away. But I also realize they have helped me. I ask a lot of questions of other artists, and I'm fine with being in process. I'm still learning about what I do, how to do it and how to stay true to this calling.

CCM: ***Speaking specifically to the craft of songwriting, how has your writing changed since your first release?***
Bethany: On the first and second records, there was a lot of wrestling. On the second record, I felt like it was a time of sowing. I was being pushed in my writing. Everyone involved in this third record noticed that this has been a harvest season. I didn't have to get myself ready for a fight. That made the songs easy to talk about, to stretch, to change. Having ownership, but not being territorial over my art, made it a much more enjoyable and honest experience.

CCM: ***What about on the song content side of things? How have things changed there?***
Bethany: For awhile now, I have struggled with anxiety. But starting last January, I met with my pastor and had the most eternal experience with the Lord. From there it snowballed. This new joyfulness comes from being a sweeter person for my family, from being able to receive the kindness of God—I am in the place where I know I am loved by God; and even if I can't make sense of that, I just want to walk in it. There's a calm about this record that I haven't felt about the others—most of the record has come out of the simple fact that I am freaking out about the reality of Jesus in my life.

CCM: ***Was there a defining moment that made you say, "Music is what I have to do"?***
Vicky: When I was 10 years old I wrote a song for a school assembly. All these verses kept coming out, so that was the first time I knew I could do it. When I was 12, I played a song for my mom. I told her I didn't want to sing it publicly because I was too afraid. She said, "If you don't sing the songs God gives you, He won't give you any more!" I played that song in church, and I saw people being ministered to and knew I wanted to write songs about God and for God.

CCM: ***It's been said that songwriting is a form of emotional expression. Does that ring true with your songs?***
Vicky: As a teenager, the only way I could express myself was in writing songs. But I wanted songwriting to be more than an emotional thing; and I wanted to take God's calling seriously, so I trained in His Word. When I had a platform, I wanted to have a message. For this media-focused generation, kids are much quicker to download a new song to their iPod than to dust off C.S. Lewis or A.W. Tozier. Songwriters have a tremendous responsibility now because people remember the songs they sing on Sunday more than the sermons. I want to carry that responsibility well so I can impact this generation with truth.

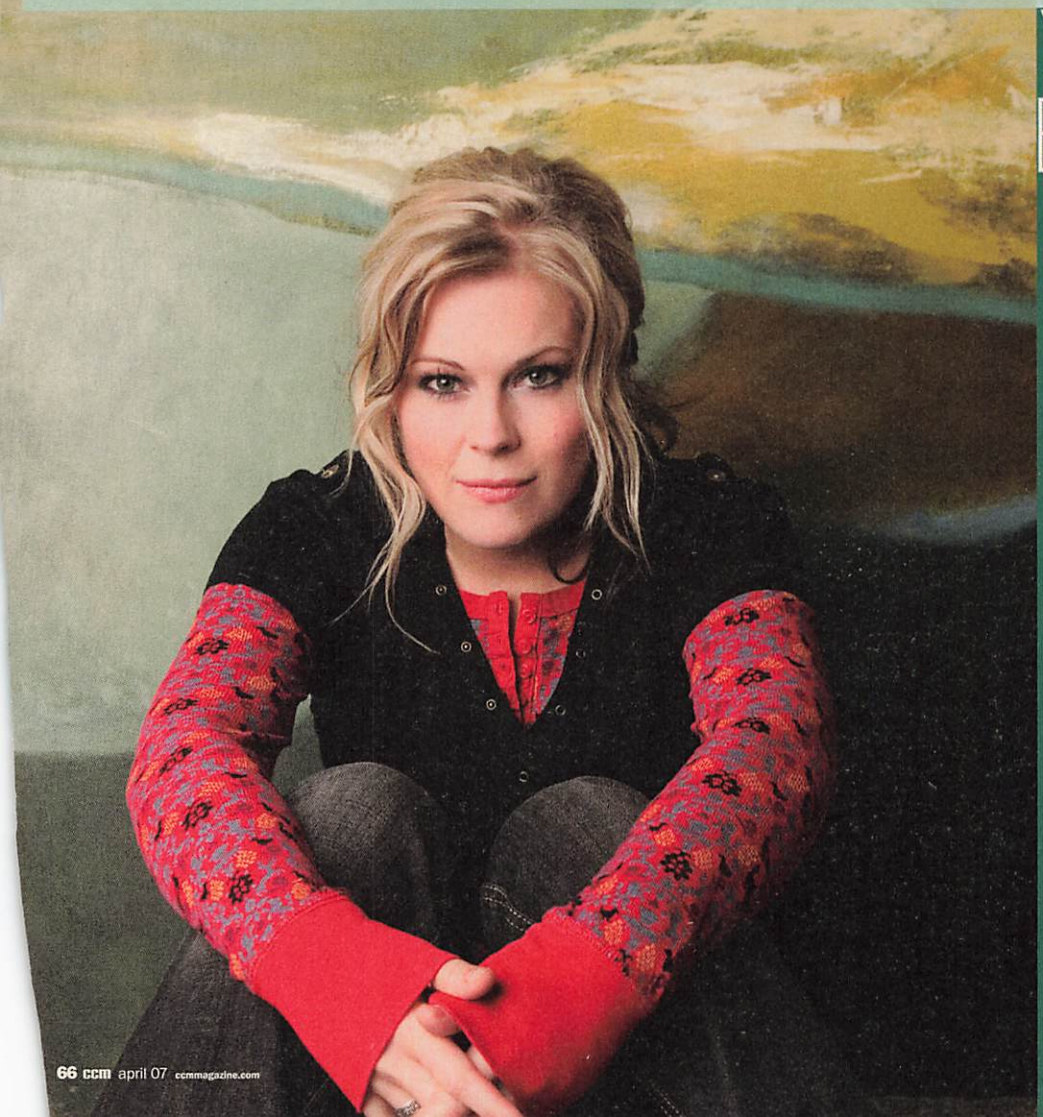
CCM: ***Where do you find inspiration?***
Vicky: My main inspiration for writing worship would be studying the Bible and trying to look at the world through God's eyes.

CCM: ***What's the key to writing a relevant worship song?***
Vicky: It's finding out where the church needs to cry out and providing the church with the words to say.

CCM: ***How do you tap into the needs of the church?***
Vicky: My band and I go to the same church in Franklin, Tenn., and we try to see what God is doing in the local body. One of the benefits of traveling is that you get to see such a cross-section of denominations. You get to see the body of Christ in a wide sweep. That helps me to be in tune with what the members are experiencing.

CCM: ***What are the guidelines you use to judge whether a song is ready for corporate worship?***
Vicky: Congregational songs are very different from singer/songwriter songs. I didn't realize that until I came under the training of Brian Doerksen ("Come, Now Is the Time to Worship") and Brenton Brown ("Everlasting God") when I was at the Oxford Vineyard Church when I graduated from college. They taught me there are things you can use as gauges to make a song accessible. One of the key things is to have a universal message that resonates with everyone, whether they are young, old, male or female. The melody needs to be simple and singable for men and women. You are providing something for the body of Christ when you write a worship song. It's not so much about pouring out your own heart; it's about serving every living church and writing something that is going to be useful to them.

CCM: ***Has the rock band trend of the last few years affected your own sound?***
Vicky: It did affect me. On my last album, *Yesterday, Today and Forever* (Sparrow), my producer and I decided to make some of the arrangements a little heavier. We turned up the electric guitars hoping that the music would resonate with kids listening to secular radio outside of the church. In hindsight, it's heavier than I wish it were. This go around, we've made a much more beautiful record. *Painting the Invisible* has more acoustic guitars and piano sounds. I feel like it is a truer expression of where I am now. ccm



VICKY BEECHING

GREY SKIES TURN BLUE

when punk rock faves MxPx reunited with Tooth & Nail Records last fall for the deluxe re-release of *Let It Happen*, fans knew the brief partnership resonated with redemptive implications—thanks specifically to the pair's once-troubled history. However, it was the next turn of events that truly raised eyebrows.

BY: JACKIE A. CHAPMAN

MxPx and Tooth & Nail Records. Like so many artist/label tales, theirs was a story of a business relationship gone wrong...

Chapter 1 opens with the Washington state punk rock trio blazing its trail in 1994. Front man/bassist Mike Herrera, guitarist Tom Wisniewski and drummer Yuri Ruley released their debut, *Pokinatcha*, on Tooth & Nail, followed by a few full-length albums and EPs, including the 1996 breakout album *Life in General*, named by *Alternative Press* magazine as one of the Top 10 punk albums of the year.

Then came a bitter parting as MxPx moved to sign exclusively with major mainstream label A&M. The blaze was so great, the bridge between MxPx and Tooth & Nail incinerated.

Only once did president/founder Brandon Ebel ever almost lose the will for his beloved Tooth & Nail to continue as a label—and this was it. Recalling the experience in a 2003 interview with *CCM* he said, "I came close because emotionally, I was drained. Mixing friendship with business is difficult. I have some great friends who are artists, but we are also in a business relationship. Sometimes it is a tough mix. The hardest thing that has happened was being involved in a lawsuit with a group who were my friends. It happened once, and I hope it never happens again. I actually almost quit then."

According to Ebel, the original tension between Tooth & Nail and MxPx arose more out of misdirected passion than anything else. As he explains now, "We were both young and super aggressive, and unfortunately the situation snowballed into something larger than expected."

The band did continue to gain face time in the wider mainstream world while on A&M, joining the "Warped Tour" and regularly appearing on MTV2 and Fuse. But with limited momentum after four releases in six years, MxPx took the indie label route in 2005.

Then, last fall it was announced that MxPx and Tooth & Nail would partner to re-release the band's 1998 compilation *Let It Happen*. Many wondered how the bridge mended.

"Thankfully, both parties have matured and come to a point where we can admit that some mistakes were made and all has been forgiven," Ebel says. "It was a tough lesson to learn but an essential one—especially as Christians."

Says MxPx's Herrera, "I think the band is looking forward to a fresh start with the 'Nail.' It feels like we've come full circle; but this time both sides know a lifetime more about music, business and priorities. We talked about the past situation, and now that's in the past. All we see is the future.

"From my perspective, MxPx has already caught the proverbial 'carrot,' now we're just looking for the rest of the salad. I'm focused on making music because that's what makes me happy."

MxPx went into the studio in early February to work on its yet-to-be-titled project, scheduled to release July 3. "Everything came so easily," Herrera says. "We recorded the record in something like 13 days. I had all the songs written, and we had all the demos done; so we went into the studio with [producer] Aaron Sprinkle [Anberlin, Eisley] and just had fun with it. The record is both serious and funny—I guess you could say it's seriously funny."

"With the past now behind us, we are 100 percent focused on the future and the upcoming record. I have heard the tracks, and they are *excellent*," Ebel says. "The interesting thing about MxPx is that although they've put out more releases than I can count on my hands, they are still just as relevant and exciting as when I first signed them.

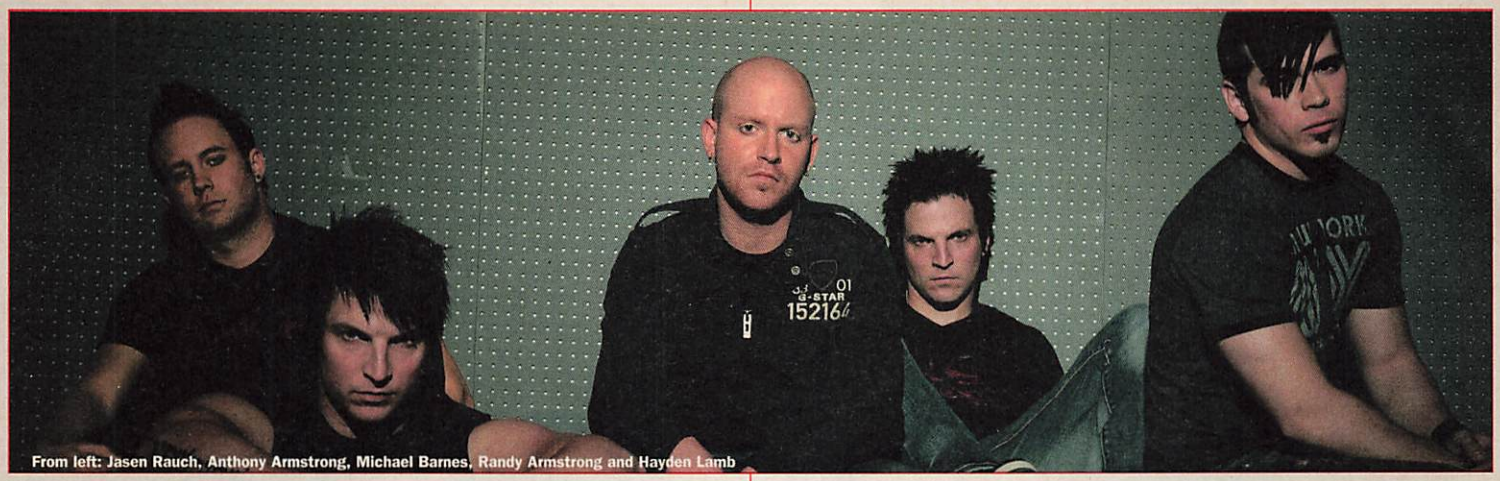
"Another fact that many people overlook is that the band is younger than a lot of our major acts. We are incredibly excited to be back on board with the band and hope to team up for the rest of its already prolific career." ccm

REDRAIN

While a slew of new rock bands was introduced to Christian music fans in 2006, only one could emerge as the year's biggest debut. That said, popularity is one of the last things that sets this band apart from the pack. By Andy Argyrakis

A day off for the members of Red is a luxury few and far between these days, considering the hard rockers recently wrapped up a mainstream tour with Three Days Grace, walked the red carpet at the 2007 GRAMMY© Awards for a "Best Rock or Rap Gospel Album" nomination, scored three Dove nominations a few days later and are currently on the road with general market stars Sevendust. Yet guitarist/songwriter Jasen Rauch elected to spend an hour of his sole day for rest and relaxation between tours with *CCM* to discuss how the blazing quintet rose from obscurity to become the best-selling new band in Christian music last year.

"We never dreamed of being in a band professionally, even though we all had played in a lot of other bands before," Rauch offers, mixing a midwest accent from his Illinois upbringing with the slight southern drawl of his current Music City surroundings. "I have a degree in engineering and was working at a Nashville studio, and we all became friends just from the mutual association of being musicians, which naturally evolved to writing something together."



From left: Jasen Rauch, Anthony Armstrong, Michael Barnes, Randy Armstrong and Hayden Lamb

As those informal sessions came to fruition, Rauch, singer Michael Barnes, bassist Randy Armstrong, his twin brother and guitarist Anthony Armstrong and drummer Hayden Lamb (who also has a twin brother who's not in the band) found out they had even more in common than hard rock musical influences. An even more unifying thread was the fact they all came from troubled upbringings but found redemption through Christ.

"We were all fans of heavier music growing up, but a lot of those bands portray tough subjects in a really negative light," explains Rauch. "You hear topics of feeling betrayed, losing a loved one and depression, but with such a dark spin."

Such music connected deeply with the young Rauch for a reason. "I was dealing with a lot of darker stuff as a teenager, and it was a really defining time," he begins to reveal. "My dad is not my biological father, but he raised me since I was 4 years old and became the Christ figure in my life. But I can identify with those darker topics because I still struggled with depression in high school, and I lost a lot of friends to suicide."

Naturally, these profound experiences and those of his bandmates influence Red's songwriting. "Instead of letting that cast a negative shadow," says Rauch, "we talk about the redemptive nature of those problems and being thankful for all we've gone through, because now we all feel called to share those experiences."

Those desires are fleshed out repeatedly on Red's debut disc, *End of Silence* (Essential), from the anti-regret anthem "Breathe Into Me" (currently a Top 30 hit on *R&R*'s Active Rock chart) and the addiction conquering "Let Go," to the prodigal son-centered "Gave It All Away" and the striking track "Wasting Time"—an inspirational battle cry in the face of persecution. With the somber sounds of "Pieces," meanwhile, the songwriters move beyond brokenness to restoration.

"We named the record *End of Silence* because we felt like we finally had the chance to talk about topics that weren't on the forefront of Christian music," Rauch explains. "Our label and management were really supportive, but we still had a bit of anxiety as to how it would be received because not a lot of Christian acts were talking about such heavy issues [when the album was being recorded two years ago]. Ever since it released, we've been very fortunate and pleased to find the songs striking a chord with lots of people saying 'thank you' and 'I'm not alone anymore.'"

Red found those responses multiplying exponentially while on tour. And given the fact this band, like so many others, feeds off the energy and emotions of its audience, this only served to increase its members' individual intensity levels. In fact, the guys admit to getting so wrapped up in the concert experience that they have sometimes caused concussions—literally—to those on stage.

"The unfortunate bi-product is we sometimes run into each other. During one show we accidentally hit the singer from an opening act who was jamming with us and dislocated his jaw," offers Rauch with a laugh, insisting it popped back into place and there are no hard feelings. "Another night, when we were doing a guitar swinging/tossing stunt, Michael got hit in the head with Anthony's guitar and had to go to the emergency room to get seven staples in his head."

For those wondering about Anthony's instrument, it indeed broke, but he bought a new one and the band played on. On the flip side of such comedic disasters, Jason McArthur, vice president of A&R for Provident Label Group, attests to the gang's intestinal fortitude and considers Red's unconventional approach highly revitalizing. "These days it's so rare to find a band with such fresh musical elements, amazing passion and charisma and a strong work ethic, not to mention a tireless dedication to their fans," he asserts. "They are not just making music; they are moving people. Red clearly stands out, and their music continues to inspire me."

Even with all the accolades (including recent Dove Award nominations in the "Rock Album," "Rock Recorded Song" and "Short Form Music Video" categories) and fanfare on the road, the members of Red see ministry as their main priority. "They're fun and funny, but they also take their role in ministry very seriously," affirms Justin Cox, guitarist for Flicker act Fireflight, who first met Red at a youth leader conference in Texas. "You can see the passion in their movements and hear the passion in Mike's voice in every song. It's an intensity that can only be driven by a greater purpose."

As evidenced throughout *End of Silence*, Red feels called to reach those who don't have a personal relationship with Jesus, whether they are struggling within the church's walls or in the watching world beyond.

"We've played for a year in [the church circuit] and that's who we are, but we're also very honored to hit clubs and bars because that's where even more lost people come up at the end of our shows and talk with us," sums up Rauch. "It's given us feedback as diverse as mothers thanking us that their son has something uplifting to listen to in youth group to a person lost in alcoholism for 10 years who wants to know more about what we're talking about. As long as we're seeing people's lives converted to Christ, or at least presenting them with our testimony, we're right on target with where our ministry needs to be. God's constantly molding us, maturing us and teaching us, which is one of the most rewarding processes we've ever gone through." ccm

OPENING THE VAULT:

U2 A PIECE OF HISTORY

When *CCM* published its first interview with U2 in August of 1982, the magazine's editors had no idea how remarkably exclusive—not to mention historic—the three-page article would prove to be. Why should they? Even though *Rolling Stone* had already dubbed U2 "The Next Big Thing," it wouldn't be until a year later that rock's leading mag would give the obscure band a feature this large. And an extensive interview focusing on the band's Christian faith? That wouldn't happen again for years...

Skip ahead to February of '07 and John J. Thompson's "Preachers, Poets & Prophets" article which appeared in that month's *CCM*. The story kicked off with a flashback to that 1982 interview, which sparked our editor to republish the U2 article in its entirety online for our **myCCM.org** community. Making the feature available to the public for the first time in 25 years immediately drew the focused attention—as in a lead headline and link—of **atU2.com**, one of the band's most popular fan-created sites. As a result, we not only logged the highest single day of online traffic we've had, we doubled our daily average for visitors.

And then came this news...

Terry Mattingly, who did that 1982 interview with U2, followed up with a blog when he discovered our reprint of his article. As he explains, *CCM* wasn't first in line for that feature story. *Rolling Stone* actually passed on it because they didn't believe Mattingly when he told them what the interview revealed. (For more details, check out his U2 blog entry at **getreligion.org/?p=2199**.)

Due to the overwhelming response we received to this historic U2 interview online, we knew it was time to actually reprint the article in full here in *CCM*. Enjoy...

From left: Adam Clayton, Bono, The Edge and Larry Mullen, Jr.

U2: ROCKERS FINALLY SPEAK OUT ABOUT THEIR RUMORED FAITH

By Terry Mattingly

The members of the rock & roll band U2 know they have many people confused. Two members of the band use strange stage names—Bono and The Edge. No one seems to know how old—or young—they really are. No one knows what to call U2's music.

And now, a few members of the rock press have started to raise another question. As the band worked its way across America this spring during its third U.S. tour, a few people began to show signs of actually hearing what the band was saying on its second album, *October* (Island). After listening to the lyrics of songs like "Gloria," "With a Shout," "Tomorrow" and "Rejoice," a few interviewers started hitting the members of the band with a loaded question: What are you, a bunch of Christians or something?

"It's time to talk about it," U2 guitarist The Edge said quietly after a recent concert on a campus in the Midwest. As it turns out, almost everything The Edge says is quiet. He does not act like a rock & roll guitar star. "We realize the band...is at a crossing point. For a long time we haven't talked with interviewers about the fact we're Christians, because it's so easy for people to misunderstand. It's easy for people who are not Christians, especially writers who do not understand, to take what we say and misinterpret it."

The four members of U2 will not speak for each other about religion and Christianity. Various members of the band are at different stages of individual journeys of faith. They are *all* scared of being stereotyped.

The Edge and [drummer Larry] Mullen, both 19, were reading the New Testament and downing glasses of orange juice in the dim auditorium dressing room. Bono, 20, and [bassist Adam] Clayton, 21, were upstairs talking with fans and would be down to join in the discussion later. The Edge said they try to make Bible study and prayer a regular part of their "winding down" process after shows.

The scene seemed strange. An hour before, these same young rockers were pounding out a torrid 90-minute set of hard rock songs off the band's first album, *Boy*, and the more recent *October*, released last year. *October* is full of obvious songs about faith and the struggle to live a Christian life in 20th-century battle zones such as the band's home—Dublin, Ireland. The Edge finally realized somebody was going to have to speak out.

"I really believe Christ is like a sword that divides the world," he said, "and it's time we get into line and let people know where we stand. You know, to much of the world, even the mention of the name of Jesus Christ is like someone scratching their nails across a chalkboard."

The brash, upbeat sounds of *Boy* gave way to the more complex, darker feel of *October*. The critics loved the first album, but their link was divided on the latter. Most of the writers who did praise *October* didn't mention the Christian content of the lyrics. Most writers either ignored the lyrics or attacked the style of the lyrics on the album.

Bono, who has read both the positive and negative reviews, finds it interesting few people have noticed what he is singing about. If critics want him to stop going after the big subject or the deep emotion, though, they can forget it. For that matter, Bono said, if another crowd of people wants him to only go after the "safe Christian subjects" and the "safe Christian crowd," they can forget that, too.

What U2 is after, Bono has said repeatedly, is music that is "bigger" than conventional rock & roll—music that is about more than sex, big cars and drugs. U2 has dodged modern rock labels like "punk," "new wave" and "neo-psychedelic." To Bono, rock music is bigger than labels. Rock is a modern art form that can deal with the subjects that dominate real life: growing up (the subject of *Boy*), work, sweat, sin, doubt and faith. The song that ends *October* is a clue to the band's goals, Bono said.

"The song is called 'Is That All?'" he said, quoting several key lines from the song. "You know, '*I can sing a song to make you happy*,' or '*I can sing a song to make you dance*,' or even '*I can sing a song to make you angry. But is that all*?'"

The song "Gloria" is about the difficulty Bono has in talking about his Christian faith. It is a mixture of the two things with which he feels comfortable in life—his faith and aggressive rock & roll. It is ironic, Bono said, that many people stop thinking the song is a love song when they notice the lyrics. "Of course, it *is* a love song. It's a song about my love for God."

Since Bono improvises many of U2's lyrics while the band is recording, his struggle to communicate during the recording of "Gloria" had an interesting result. "I was so restrained in trying to express myself that I had to resort to another language, to a way somebody else had expressed it a long time ago in a Gregorian chant. Hence, the Latin. And that's the way it ended up. It ended up in Latin because I couldn't find the kind of English words to say what I needed to say. I *still* have trouble talking about it."

U2 was formed while Bono, The Edge, et al were in their mid teens at Dublin's Mount Temple School. When listing influences on the band's sound, Bono names Talking Heads, Patti Smith and the now defunct Television. U2 has also been

"I'VE SPENT MOST OF MY LIFE **AVOIDING** LABELS. I DON'T INTEND TO **ADOPT** ONE NOW."

Bono

influenced by the Renaissance music the members studied in school.

"We are the original garage band," Bono said, pronouncing the word garage so it almost rhymes with marriage. "We're from garageland. We formed the band around the drums, in the sense that Larry was the only one who could play before we began... The Edge could play a few chords and so could I. Adam couldn't play at all, although he told us he could. And we literally just stumbled our way, in the dark."

The band was after a sound Bono describes with words like "atmosphere," "bigger" and "grand." Instead of learning the classic rock & roll clichés, the members of U2 taught themselves to play the music they really wanted to play. Their own. The Edge said he is just now getting around to listening to many of the classic rock guitarists because he has been too busy working on U2's music.

The Edge is an "anti-guitar hero," Bono said. The band's music is built on the tension between the hard rock beat provided by Mullen and Clayton and the atmospheric sounds of The Edge's work on guitar and piano. On stage and in the studio, The Edge avoids the "macho" postures of the guitar idol and spends his time building the sound of the band through feedback, overtones and clusters of notes hanging in echo while he plays short, crisp leads against the sound of his own guitar. The Edge often plays open strings like the "chanter" drone of a set of bagpipes while fretting other notes further up the guitar neck.

After a year or two of honing its basic sound on the Irish club scene, U2 recorded a three-song single, *U2-3*, in late 1979 that went to the top of the charts in Ireland. The band played in London for several months before signing with Island Records and releasing "11 O'Clock Tick Tock" as its first single in England. *Boy*, with Steve Lillywhite as producer, was released in October of 1980, and the band was on its way.

The success of *Boy*—including the hit song, "I Will Follow," which also received considerable FM airplay in the States—allowed the band to have more freedom during the recording of *October*. Thus, more of the band's feelings ended up on the album. Some people, including the band's management, were shocked by the LP's content.

"I think it is a side of ourselves we like to sweep under the carpet," Bono said. "I don't believe in preaching at people. You know, I always include myself in the 'we'... '*We*' have fallen. I include myself. 'I Fall Down' is a song about my own failures," he said. "I'm not telling everybody I have the answers."

Bono and the other members of the band are writing material for the third album. Scheduled tours of Japan and Australia have been canceled because they feel they should be at home. Events in Ireland are never far from the band's thoughts.

"I really don't know how it's going to turn out," Bono said of the band's future. "I know I may start being more specific in the lyrics... There are a lot of things that I have been writing in my little red book that I feel have got to come out."

When the members of U2 describe their feelings about religion, Ireland is always hovering in the background. After growing up in a land torn by religion, Bono prefers to talk about Christianity instead of religion. The band is anxious not to be pigeon-holed as a "religious band."

"I've spent most of my life avoiding labels. I don't intend to adopt one now." Bono is also convinced that there are more people in the audience who understand what he is singing about than many music critics think.

"I like to think people feel it. They just don't want to allow themselves to feel it. I mean, everybody feels it. *Everybody*.

"I can't accept a belief that I just came out of gas, you know? That we, as a race, just exploded into existence—I can't believe that, and I don't think others can, really. Maybe they can accept it on a sort of 'thin' level, but not really deep down. Deep down, everybody is aware."

If critics say the band has floated off into a pretentious world dominated by a never-never-land of religion, Bono doesn't care. In fact, it might be the non-believers who do not have their eyes open.

"Things around can shock us into a realization of what is going down. When you look at the starvation, when you think that a third of the population of this earth is starving, and crying out in hunger, I don't think you can sort of smile and say, 'I know. Well, we're the jolly human race. We're all very nice, really.'

"I mean, we're not. People have got to see what is going on."

A new single, released overseas but not yet in the States, except as an import, is entitled "A Celebration." By all indications, we've not seen the last of U2. ccm

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	CINDY MORGAN, *SEP 1993*
	YOUNG MESSIAH TOUR, *DEC 1993*
	GEOFF MOORE & THE DISTANCE, *JUL 1994*
	BEBE & CECE WINANS, *NOV 1994*
	PFR, *JAN 1995*
	CHARLIE PEACOCK, *FEB 1995*
	POINT OF GRACE, *MAR 1995*
	GARY CHAPMAN, *MAR 1996*
	TWILA PARIS, *JUN 1996*
	DAKODA MOTOR CO., *JUL 1996*
	KIRK FRANKLIN, *AUG 1996*
	ANOINTED, *DEC 1996*
	SUSAN ASHTON, *JAN 1997*
	FRINGE ACTS: THE SUPERTONES, *JUL 1997*
	BEBE WINANS, *JAN 1998*
	A CALL TO WORSHIP, *MAR 1998*
	MARGARET BECKER, *APR 1998*
	DC TALK, *OCT 1998*
	KIRK FRANKLIN, *DEC 1998*
	BURLAP TO CASHMERE, *JAN 1999*
	SUPERTONES, *FEB 1999*
	AVALON, *MAR 1999*
	CAEDMON'S CALL, *APR 1999*
	ANOINTED, *MAY 1999*
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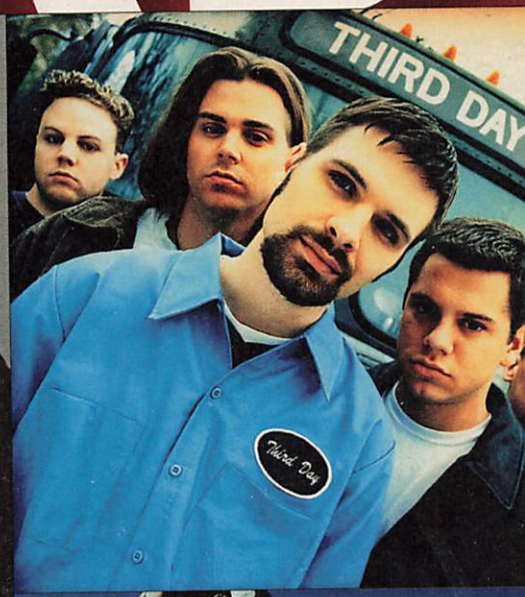
THE YEAR OF THIRD



FEW ARTISTS HAVE HAD MORE IMPACT ON THE CHRISTIAN MUSIC LANDSCAPE DURING THE PAST DECADE THAN THIRD DAY. THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, THE CONSISTENT QUALITY OF THE BAND'S MUSIC, COMBINED WITH AN UNWAVERING PASSION TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL, HAS EARNED THEM THE RESPECT OF CRITICS, AND THE LOVE AND LOYALTY OF A LEGION OF FANS.

DAY

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

In recognition of the band's achievements, Essential Records has declared 2007 "The Year of Third Day." The band's musical legacy is being celebrated on two very special releases. *Chronology, Volume One (1996-2000)* will hit store shelves on March 27 and will be followed by *Chronology, Volume Two (2001-2006)*, due out in August. Both projects will include CD and DVD discs featuring some of Third Day's most-loved songs, as well as never-before-seen footage of the group very early in its career.

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Amazing
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"It's interesting, and I think it will encourage a lot of people, especially people who are in middle school and high school," says Third Day lead vocalist Mac Powell, phoning in from a secluded Virginia studio where the band is already at work on its next studio album. "They'd say, 'Okay, they've come a long way; and if they can do it, we can do it'!"

Such self-deprecating remarks are not unusual for Third Day members. Despite having won three GRAMMY® Awards and 24 Gospel Music Association Dove Awards, Powell and bandmates Tai Anderson, Brad Avery, David Carr and Mark Lee have remained unaffected by music industry accolades and keep their focus on music and ministry.

Those have been the driving forces since the early days of Third Day. "We always had these huge dreams and hopes. At the time we thought we were really great," Mac says with a laugh. "Looking back on it now, we weren't that great, but we had heart and drive. We really overcame not being great musicians with just having great hearts and excitement about our music and our faith. We always had high hopes of what it could be."

Mac and Mark actually met during high school while performing in the school band. They then added David, Tai and Brad to the line-up. Mac says the biggest challenge for Third Day in the beginning was finding time to get the band off the ground. "The early obstacles were us just being in school," Mac states. "David and Tai were in high school, and Mark and I were in college when we first started out. We were just trying to figure out how we were going to do this and how we were going to spend enough time to make this band successful, yet, at the same time, go to school and have part-time jobs to keep ourselves alive. Somehow we worked through it."

Congratulations Third Day on over a decade of rock and worship!

Gomers love and appreciate Third Day more than we can show with applause, CD sales, or concert attendance. Thank you for allowing us the privilege of supporting Third Day as you reach the world with the love of the Lord. It is because of your work, your generous spirit, and your love for your fans that we enjoy our Gomer family, and the online community that sparked it. We pray for continued success and *at least* ten more years of moving music, inspiring lyrics, exciting concerts, warm hearted Gomer Gatherings, and fun!

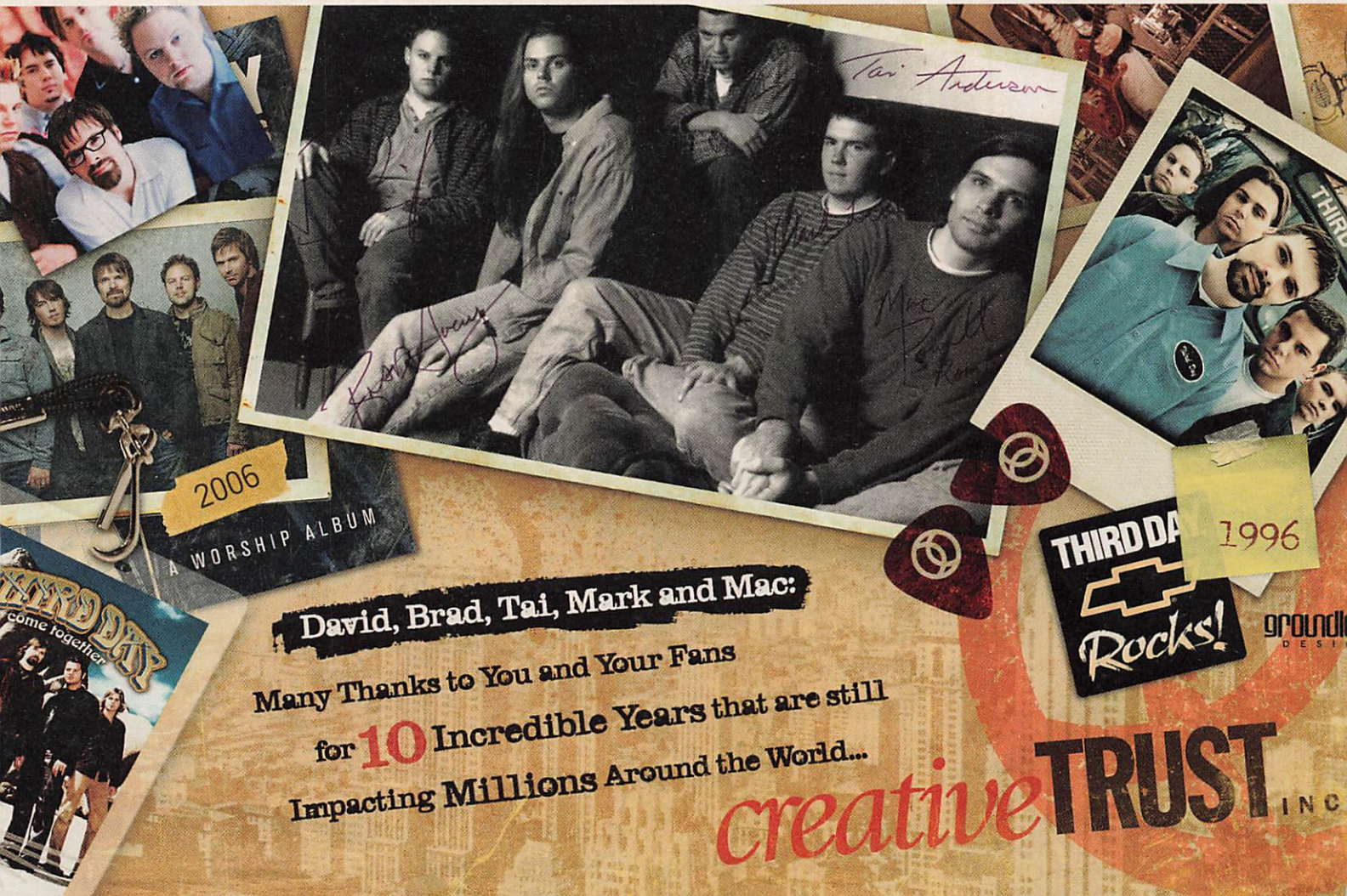
ThirdDay.com/boards Gomers.net Gomertopia.com logo, photo: Dale Manning design: RendezvousClothing.net

Mark recalls the band's early days as being an exciting time, filled with a sense of purpose and unbridled creative energy. "It was definitely apparent that God was doing something special through us in the early days of Mac and I getting together," he says. "There were all these things going on when we were both getting excited about our faith. We started doing shows together, and Mac, in particular, started writing a lot of songs about these things we were talking about and that were churning in our heads. I'd been in a few bands before, but I'd never been in a band where we were creating our own music and playing our own songs. I really did feel like we had something special going on."

The band's initial introduction to the music business came when they signed to Georgia-based indie label Gray Dot Records, but the band eventually made its way on to Reunion Records. Brad says Reunion Records had Michael W. Smith on its roster and so many other acts that he and his Third Day buddies admired. Shortly after they signed to Reunion, they transitioned to sister-label Essential Records, home to Jars of Clay, where they have remained a staple on the rock label's roster.

CREATING *CHRONOLOGY*

So, just how does "The Year of Third Day" make the guys feel? "Old," Brad answers with a laugh. "I've been on the road for 15-17 years of my life. It makes me feel old in some respects, but, in others, time flies. We've got so many memories, and we've made a lot of music in 10 years—nine records at this point. I feel proud of what we've accomplished, how hard we've worked, and the music that we created."



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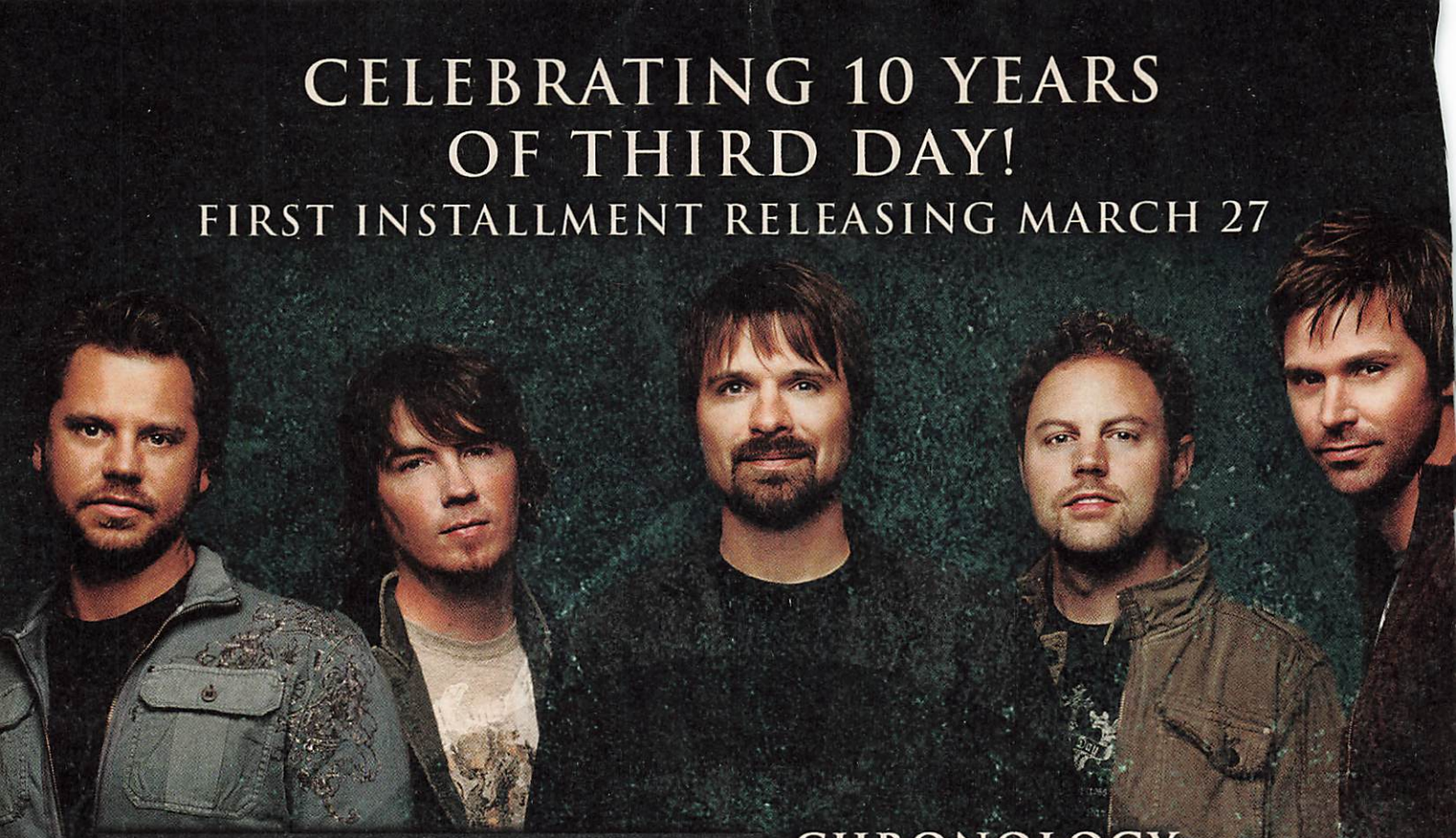

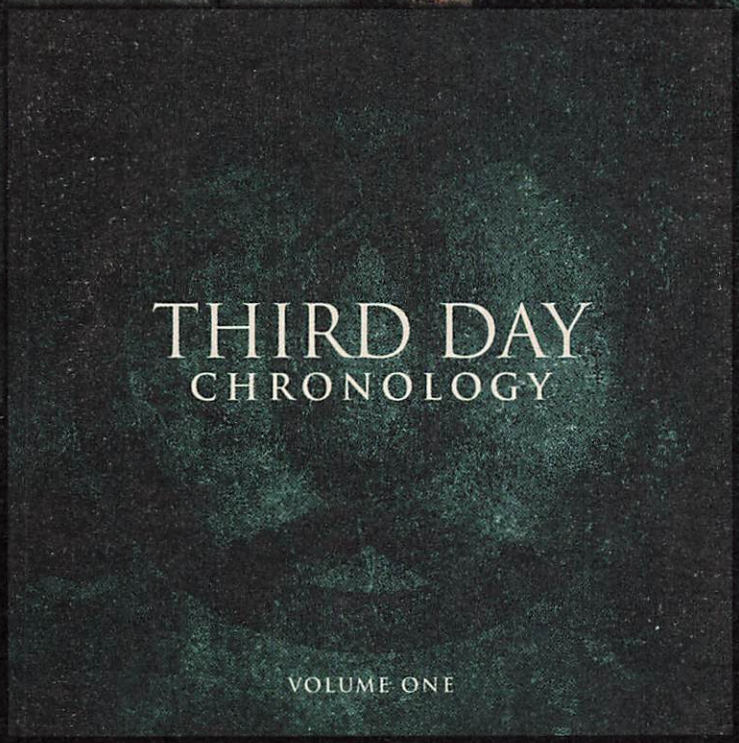

For a complete track listing go to www.thirdday.com!

CHRONOLOGY, VOLUME ONE (1996-2000)

ON CD/DVD

FEATURING NEW MIXES OF:
- Nothing At All · Forever
- Consuming Fire
- Love Song · Who I Am

BRAND NEW RECORDINGS OF:
- Thief · My Hope Is You

LIVE VERSIONS OF:
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LOOK FOR
CHRONOLOGY, VOLUME TWO
(2001-2006)
ON AUGUST 7, 2007

Chronology celebrates the music that the band has made over the years. More than just a "best of" collection of hits, the project finds the band delving deeply into its roots and reinventing some favorite songs. "It gave us the opportunity to rework 'Thief,' which is probably the oldest song in the Third Day catalog," says Brad. "That's one of the first songs ever written by Mac. That was performed way before I joined. We did it again, and it's a great version. We always loved the energy and spirit of that song."

Mark adds, "Some of these songs we played on a couple of early albums, but they really have taken on a whole new life," he says. "One song in particular, is called 'Who I Am.' It was off the ***Conspiracy No. 5*** record. We did a remix of it, and we were all blown away. There are a lot of old songs that we loved, but always wanted to do more with, so it's a chance for us to pull them out and play them like they're new songs again. I'm really excited about the process."

The first volume of ***Chronology*** contains new mixes of "Consuming Fire," "Have Mercy," "Forever," "Nothing at All," "Love Song" and "I've Always Loved You." There are also live versions of "Blackbird" and "Alien," as well as a couple of rare bonus tracks—"Long Time Comin'" and "She Sings in Riddles," originally released on the rare 1999 ***Southern Tracks***.

Both volumes of ***Chronology*** will also include special, never-before-seen video footage of the band early in its career, along with commentary from the band members. Fans will be treated to vintage video of the group before Mac had facial hair. "We watched hours and hours of old Third Day concerts," says Mark. "We

THIRD DAY Beyond the USA

It's no secret that Third Day's concert tours routinely sell out in venues across the country. But the Gomers, as Third Day fans call themselves, aren't only found on American soil; the band also has an active fan-base overseas.

In January 2007, the band toured Australia and New Zealand. Over the years, it has built a loyal following in the land "down under" and concert ticket sales reflected that loyalty as all of the shows were sold out. The members of Third Day have made a commitment to develop overseas markets and plan to increase their global touring in the next few years.

"They are great fans who love to rock," Brad says of the audiences in Australia and New Zealand. "Radio is catching on, so the market is growing and it's getting better and better. It's a long trip, but we have such a great time."

There are plans later in the year to visit Jamaica and the United Kingdom, where there are already concerts booked in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England. Early indicators are that the U.K. shows will all be sold out. "We get to play in London again," Brad enthuses. "It will be our first time to play at Royal Albert Hall which is exciting because of all of its history."

Touring internationally is a priority for the band. There are plans for Third Day to return to Europe and Australia, and they are mapping out tour dates next year that will take them to Asia and South America.

Christian music isn't as readily available outside the U.S., which Mac says makes fans abroad very appreciative. "When you go to play in another country, the people are so excited to see you," he says. "In America, we are kind of spoiled with Christian music. If you want to see a concert, there's one in town nearly every week where most people live."

David agrees. "People in other countries are hungry for music and they don't get a lot of it. So they come ready to party. It was an awesome and very encouraging time for us."

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decided on a lot of the segments we used, not necessarily based on the best quality shows, but when we felt there were some historic moments that we really wanted to share. It's really fun for us as a band to go back and watch all of this. I really think we've progressed a long way."

One of the most intriguing things about Third Day is that they've made that progression together. The music business is a mercurial world where band members come and go, but Mac, Mark, Tai, David and Brad have remained a cohesive unit. "The thing that we are most proud of is that we've stayed together for all of these years," say Mac. "It's very rare in music today, in any kind of musical genre."

Mac attributes this to several factors. "This is more than just a band. This is a calling and our mission. That's a big part of it," he says. "Also, success breeds success; and I think because we had success early, it helped us. It made it easier for us to stay together and move forward with it. From the beginning, the five of us have been equal partners. People think because I'm the lead singer, I'm the one that decides what we're going to do. That's not the case. I have 20% say because we've been equal partners from the beginning."

Each member is excited about Third Day's future. "We are really committed to following the U2 model of always surprising people," says Tai. "You have to meet them where they are, but you have to take them somewhere else as well. So we're looking at pushing ourselves. The next album is not going to be ***Wherever You Are, Part II***. It's not going to be ***Wired, Part II***. It's going to be something different. But, right now, we have no idea what that is."

"We're definitely excited about the future," adds David. "There's a lot of new ground that can still be broken. We are going forward. We're still young and still have a lot of life ahead, and a lot of music to offer."

(continued on Page 92)

THIRD DAY

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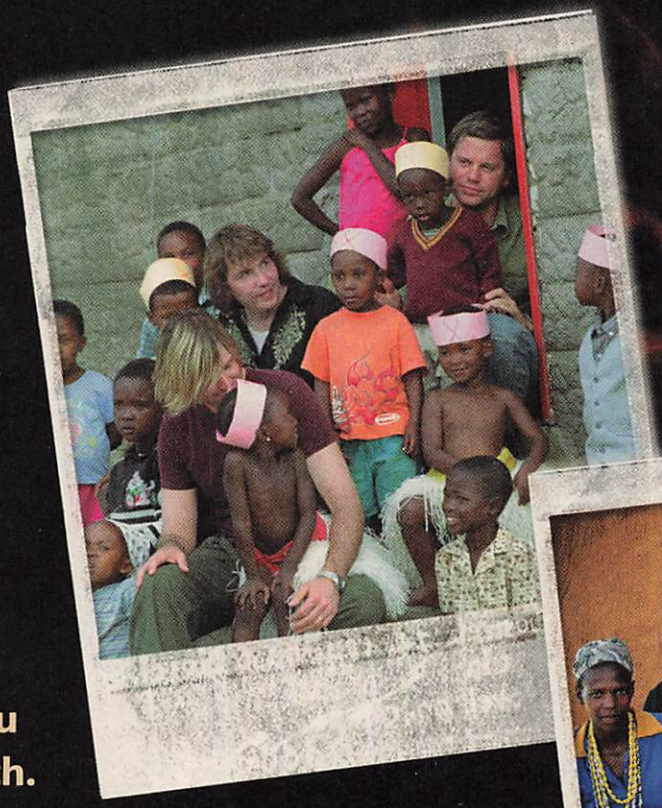

Third Day in Lesotho, Africa

Tai Anderson in Gulu, Northern Uganda

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My First Day as a Member of Third Day

Band members look back and recall their origins with the award-winning band

Tal Anderson - I was a junior in high school, and I was one of the smart kids. I had gone to an interview for the Governor's Honors Program, where they pick students to study at a university during the summer. I was in the finals of the interviews for this program, and David was working on a demo for Third Day. He called and asked me to play. I had just been at the interview, so I'm wearing my slacks and button-down shirt. On the way back, I stopped at the little studio where they were working. While I was there recording, there was a guy with a camera; and we were all getting our pictures taken. So I posed for some pictures, and I guess at that moment I was in the band. It was very unofficial. It was several years later when they reminded me that I actually was never asked to be in the band, but that I was just there. What's really cool is we have mine and David's first show on videotape. On the DVD extras of ***Chronology***, we do some commentary about it; and you see both of us in our first shows. We're just little kids. He was 17, and I was 16, really skinny and just totally nervous. No stage presence whatsoever. We were all wearing what we had worn to school that day. We were totally clueless.

Brad Avery - I just showed up to one of the rehearsals with all of my gear. Back in those days, our rehearsal space was underneath the stage at the Strand Theater on Marietta Square, in Marietta, GA, which is where Third Day got its start playing shows. It was a sound nightmare because it was a 10 foot by 10 foot room, and you had all these guys blaring as loud as they could. And all of the sound was bouncing off the brick walls and off the stage and everything else. It sounded horrible. They were trying me out, and I was trying them out to see what we thought of each other. I left that practice thinking it wasn't going to work out. My girlfriend, Mindy, said, "What did you think?" And I said, "Boy, it was rough." She responded, "Well, maybe you should go back and try it again." I said, "I don't know if I could do that again." She came back again, "I'd like you to try it. This is what you moved to Georgia for. This is what you've been praying for all these years. Maybe this is the right thing. You need to give it one more try." When I left that practice, Mac gave me a tape with "Consuming Fire" and "Blackbird." It was just Mac and his acoustic guitar singing those songs. I went home and learned the guitar parts. The next week, the very first thing we did was work on those two songs. When Mac counted off to begin "Consuming Fire," that was basically when I joined the band. As soon as I played the intro, Mac stopped. We all looked at each other, and we knew we were a band at that point.

UGANDA

Third Day

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Samaritan's Purse would like to express our special thanks to the band members of Third Day for their support of our Operation Christmas Child project. Not only did they pack gift-filled shoe boxes, but they also gave a generous contribution that enabled us to ship thousands of boxes to hurting children in Uganda.

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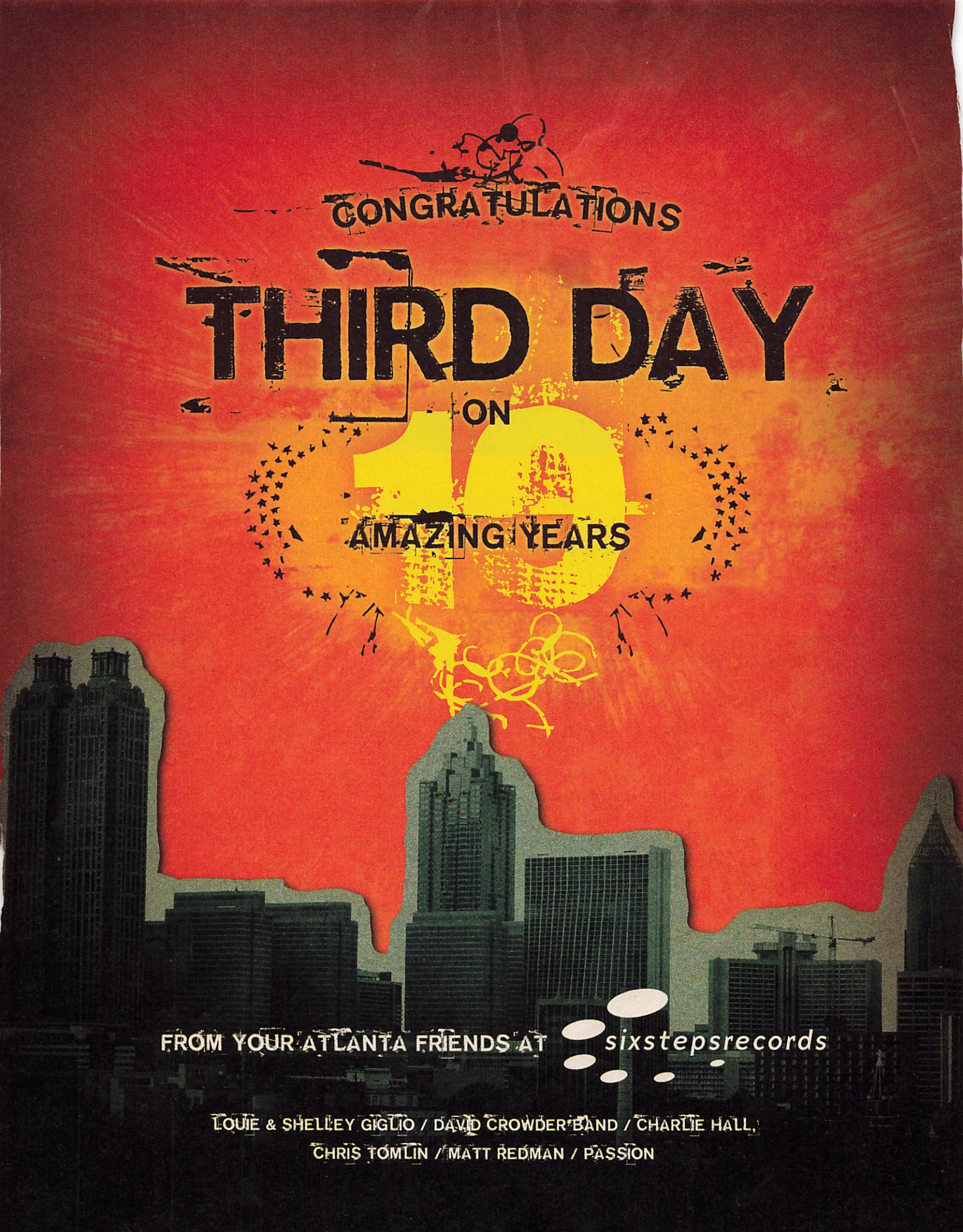
You can help brighten a child's life too! Get involved by packing a box and praying for the project. To learn more, visit www.samaritanspurse.org or call (800) 353-5949.

David Carr - My youth pastor hooked me up with the guys. Keep in mind, this was pre-Tai. So it was me, Mac and Mark. They came over to my house because I'm the drummer, and usually everyone goes to the drummer's house so he doesn't have to move his drumset. We just sort of shook hands, met each other and dove in. I knew instantly. They showed me a few songs, which was their very early stuff. I kicked in and gave it my best shot. I instantly felt the connection to it; I felt like this was it. I knew it was going to work. When we first started playing a song together, it was a magical moment. It was a very memorable day for me.

Mark Lee - We did several shows without a name. I guess my first day with Third Day was when we came up with a name, which was at Aimee's 18th birthday party. [Aimee is now Mrs. Mac Powell.] We'd been trying to come up with a name. We had some ideas, and nobody at the party liked any of them. So we kept thinking, and we came up with Third Day. That was my first day in Third Day, although Mac and I had done a few shows a few months prior. Actually, the first band we played in together was the marching band at our high school, outside of Atlanta.

Mac Powell - I just remember we weren't officially called Third Day, and it was basically Mark and myself. A couple of weeks after Mark and I had quit this garage band during high school, Mark asked me, "Hey, do you want to be in this Christian band?" I was excited about sharing my faith with music. That's basically the first thing I remember. It was the spring of 1991, right when we were graduating from high school. We had been in this garage band called Nuclear Hoedown, which was horrible. God was working on my heart at the time and was really telling me to quit this band, although it's what I'd always wanted to do. I had finally made it into this band after years of wanting to, and all of a sudden God's asking me to quit. I didn't understand why, but I knew that God is God and He knows better than I do. So, I quit. I don't know if it was a week later, or days later, when Mark said, "Why don't we start a Christian band?" He knew the reason I quit was because I wanted to start living my life for the Lord. I said, "That's okay. We can do that." I had no idea what that meant other than we wanted to talk about our faith in our music.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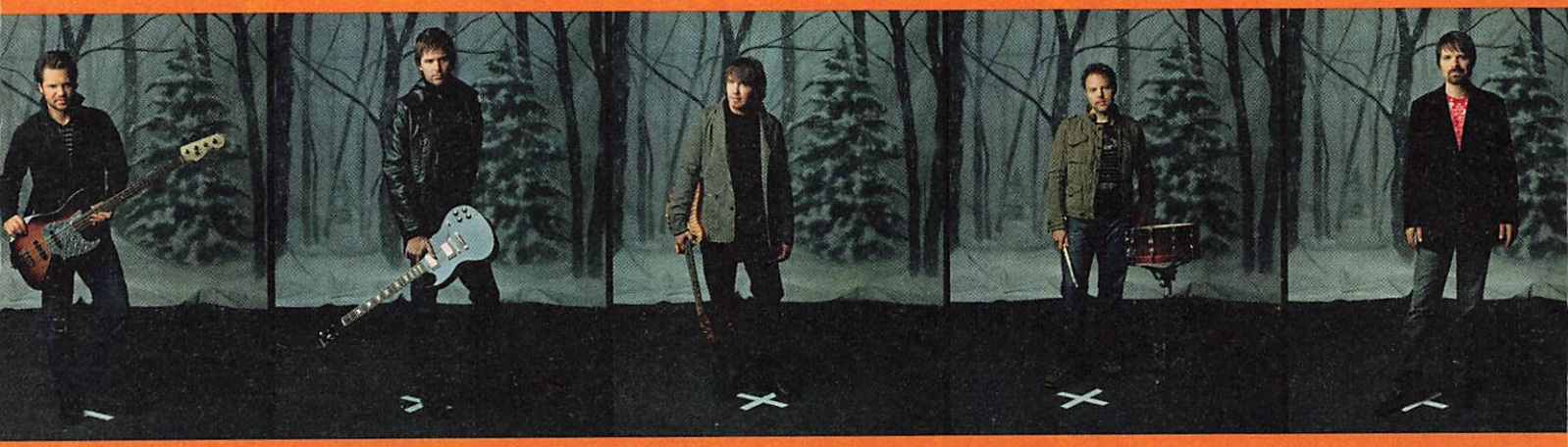
INSIDE THIRD DAY

hings You Probably Don't Know About Your Favorite Band
The Guys Dish on Each Other)



Brad Avery - David Carr is a neat freak and the kind of guy who has to have everything in its place. He doesn't get mad about it, but it gets to a point where he tells us he's tired of us being sloppy. And he starts cleaning up behind everyone.

Inevitably, when you are on the road, you open up a soda can and start drinking it; and you'll be interrupted and never finish it. David will come on the bus and find every drink holder full, but no one will claim them anymore—so he'll throw all of them away.

David's the neat freak. The rest of us are slobs.

Tai Anderson - When we first started touring and we'd stop for food, you'd never know when the next stop would be. So Mac would always buy multiple hamburgers or cheeseburgers or whatever, and he'd take one and stash it somewhere in the van. It was my van, and sure enough, about a week later, I'd smell something. I'd start digging around in the van, and there would be all this rotten food that Mac had stashed. He's like a squirrel, and it seems like he's still like that. When you go in Mac's bunk on the bus, he's got pictures of his family and CDs thrown everywhere. I don't know how he sleeps in there. It's like a little squirrel nest. He likes to stash stuff away in little nooks.

Mark Lee - Mac loves the spirit of competition. It can be five minutes before we have to go on stage, and somebody might throw a wadded-up piece of paper across the room... and it would land in the trash can. Mac will say, "Alright, we're not going on stage until somebody else does that." Before you know it, you've got four or five guys all lined up trying to throw a piece of paper in the trash can from across the room. He loves sports. He's always been a big sports fan, which translates to wanting to go to every baseball or football game he can possibly go to. We pull into Omaha, Nebraska, and, if we find out that there is a minor league baseball game going on across town and the timing is going to work out for us to go before the show, we'll go. So we've seen quite a few minor league and college baseball games over the years. We've seen a lot of good professional ball as well. That's been fun. Mac has always been the ring man when it comes to sports.

David Carr - Brad is very much a metal guy. All of the head-banging stuff from the '80s? Yeah, he still likes it. He also likes a lot of the things the rest of us like. Mark is very smart and loves to read these books you've never heard of. He's an intellectual. He likes to explore different trains of thought. I think he's one of the more "off the beaten path" kind of guys. In his approach to life, he comes from a more intellectual perspective.

Mac Powell - Tai is a major competitor. He is a great guy and has a great heart, but, if you get Tai to a competition, he's going to be the best. We went bowling with the David Crowder Band when we were on tour with them. We were down probably 50 or 60 points. Tai ended up getting strike after strike after strike because he could not stand losing. He always brings us from behind to win the game, whether it is whiffle ball, or bowling, or whatever. Brad is an avid golfer. He usually plays at least three times a week, and he's always watching the golf channel. Everybody will be doing their own thing, and he's working on his golf swing and reading golf magazines.

THIRD DAY

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CONGRATULATIONS, THIRD DAY
ON TEN YEARS OF MUSIC AND MINISTRY.

LILLIAN, CHERYL, AND ALL YOUR FRIENDS
AT O'NEIL HAGAMAN

(continued from Page 82)

LANDMARK MOMENTS

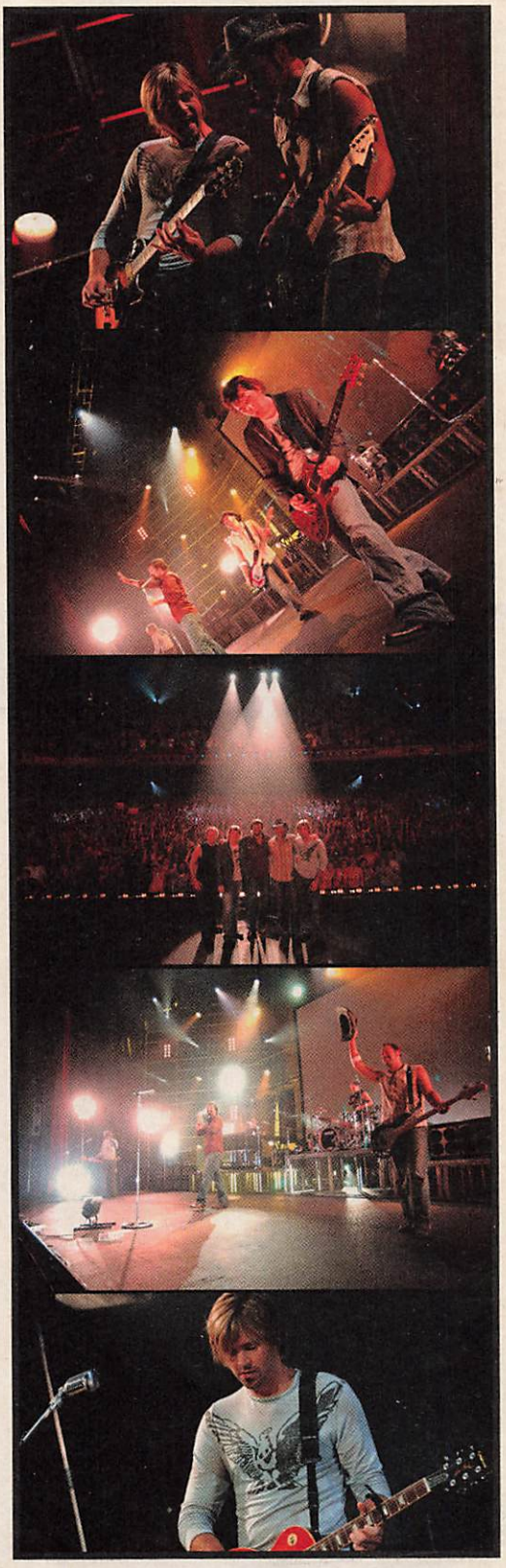
Throughout the years, it's been obvious God has continued to have His hand on the band as they've become one of Christian music's most successful acts. They've earned an enviable collection of gold and platinum albums, scored numerous hits at radio and amassed an impressive list of industry accolades.

Among those moments, there have been certain landmarks the guys will always remember. "When we made ***Time***, it was a real breakthrough for us because we got to work with [producer] Monroe Jones," says Brad. "It was a very important relationship for us because Monroe is a great person to hang with, and he brought the best out of us. We are really proud of that record. That was a highlight for us. We had our first AC single off that record, 'I've Always Loved You.' It was our very first AC hit. We didn't even have AC radio [playing us] at that point yet. That was a pivotal time in our career, and it helped forge the relationship we are so thankful to enjoy with AC radio."

The 2001 Dove Awards will always be a memorable night for Third Day as the band won five awards—Artist of the Year, Group of the Year, Rock Recorded Song for "Sky Falls Down," Praise & Worship Album for ***Offerings***, and Special Event Album for ***City on a Hill: Songs of Worship and Praise***. "That was a big validation for us," Mac says. "We'd won a few Doves before, but that was when we won Artist and Group of the Year for the first time. That was a landmark."

Tai also remembers getting a dose of perspective the following day, when the band flew to a show in Los Angeles. "It was the stage that's used at the end of ***Spinal Tap***," he says referencing the legendary film. "We're playing on that stage, and [the venue] was about half-full. After the night before, we felt like we should be the biggest thing in the world. But you learn, there are big ups and downs. You find those moments where you kind of savor them and hold onto them, but you definitely have to find your identity apart from the highs and lows."

The success of Third Day has also afforded the band the opportunity to meet people



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CAA

they've always admired. "One of them was Billy Graham," says David. "It really was special for us. And we actually played a rally for President Bush a few years ago, and it was just cool. He came back and talked to us for about five minutes, which is a lot of time for the President to spend with you. That was a milestone, and we met Bono a few years ago in Atlanta. We grew up on U2's music—and I'm a fan of all four of them—but getting to meet Bono was pretty huge."

Third Day has also enjoyed some pioneering partnerships, such as the band's longterm deal with Chevy. "It's been really historic," says Tai. "It's pretty groundbreaking to have a big company such as Chevy [involved] with Christian music. It's really been a win/win/win—a win for us, a win for Chevy and a win for our fans."

HELPING HANDS

Beyond the awards and great photo ops with influential people, the times that stand out most for the members of Third Day are the opportunities for ministry. Tai says they take very seriously "the Biblical challenge: to whom much is given, much is required."

Third Day first partnered with Habitat for Humanity in 2001 and from there has devoted time to other causes, such as child soldiers in Africa. "The more success we've had, the more motivated we've been to use that platform to do something," say Tai, who says they also encourage their fans to become involved in helping others. "We're never going to ask our fans to do something that we're not doing ourselves."

As the members of Third Day look to the future, what do they hope the band will be remembered for in years to come? "I hope people enjoy our music," says Brad. "That's what we do. Our legacy is our music, and I think we've created great music that stands the test of time. We want to create great art that encourages people. Ultimately, we feel like God has changed our lives and given us a great opportunity to share our faith through music. We want our legacy to be the people that God has touched through our music and our lives. We pray we've made a positive impact for the Kingdom of God."

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Third Day

on their 2007 Grammy Award
and their 10th Anniversary of making great music.

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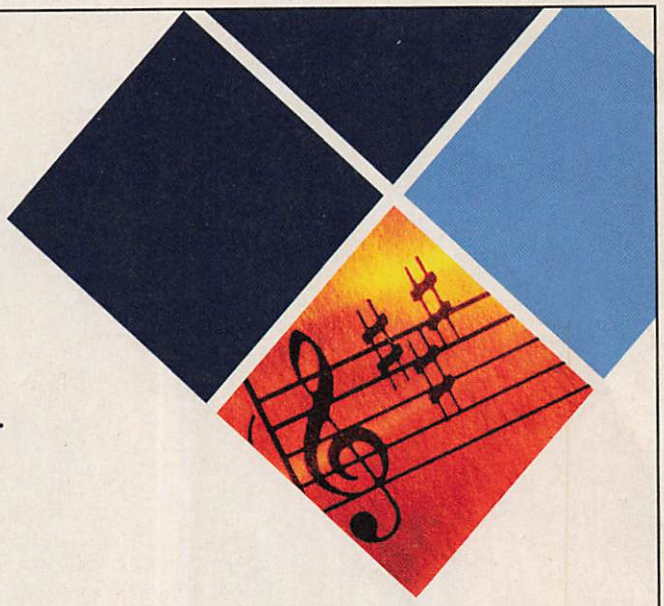

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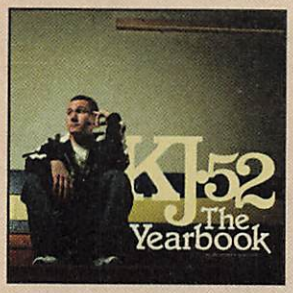
A *MAN* NAMED JONAH

THIS PAST JANUARY, *CCM* READERS NAMED KJ-52 THEIR CHOICE FOR "BEST HIP-HOP ARTIST" FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW. WITH HIS NEW ALBUM, *THE YEARBOOK*, HE LOOKS TO RETAIN THE TITLE.



KJ-52
The Yearbook
BEC

File Under: Rap/Hip-hop/Alternative Rock **Grade:** A

MR. SORRENTINO GETS PERSONAL

Hip-hop artist KJ-52 has recently made a point of sharing the styles from his high school days in anticipation of his new CD, *The Yearbook*. The 31-year-old offers frightening fashion observations, such as mullets on the guys, massive hair on the girls and horrible clothes all around. And he not only follows suit with several hysterical rhymes and more sobering stories relating to that time period, but bridges a modern hip-hop approach with that old-school era (recalling the diverse likes of Arrested Development, A Tribe Called Quest and The Fugees).

Sure, the Christian artist has often been considered an alternate to Eminem, but this time through he expands that intensity-filled palette with additional instrumental flourishes and lyrical depth. While he's quick to poke fun at his past (and the fact that he's Caucasian) with "It Ain't Easy Being Tweezy," songs such as "Fanmail" tackle much more meaty subject matter and elevated musical sensibility. Across a somber piano, subtle turntable scratches, a female background vocalist and an envelope-opening sound effect, KJ gives listeners a literal sampling from his mailbag, covering heart-heavy issues such as divorce, addiction and sexuality.

On that track, along with the self-esteem-focused, neo-soul shuffle "Daddy's Girl," the rapper suggests hopeful resolutions in Christ to even the most serious situations, simultaneously serving the church and his growing audience on the streets. Throughout "You'll Never Take Me Down," KJ mixes hip-hop with hard rock, dueting with Disciple singer Kevin Young through a message of unyielding perseverance.

Much of this ambitious musical and thematic progression can be credited to KJ taking up the self-production reigns on all but two tracks, while turning to the versatile Aaron Sprinkle (Jeremy Camp, Eisley) to put icing on the other pair. Ambitious studio wizardry can also be applied to the call-to-action anthem "Wake Up," featuring guest vocalist Toby Morell from Emery, which again merges clubs beats with alternative rock undertones.

That said, listeners seeking pure enjoyment won't have to worry about KJ abandoning his fun-filled persona. Several tracks are sure to rev up any party, such as the disco-tipped "Do Yo Thang," while others are sure to draw out the inner high schooler in us all ("You Hang Up First" traces an over-dramatic adolescent break-up). As a result of these many facets, *The Yearbook* will likely be much more than a barely cracked spine on the shelf, but rather a breakthrough sure to see several spins long after this spring's graduation.

ANDY ARGYRAKIS

BETHANY DILLON

Waking Up
Sparrow

File Under: Singer/Songwriter Pop **Grade:** A

THIRD TIME'S A CHARM

From the first note of *Waking Up*, one is quick to realize that this could be a career album for the still young Bethany Dillon. At merely 18, Dillon releases her third album April 3, a project that is not only mature lyrically but, musically, is leaps and bounds beyond her two previous efforts. Admired for her artistic depth, past albums have seen Dillon carve out an acoustic niche. And, while 2005's *Imagination* slowed the tempo down, *Waking Up* finds Dillon returning to the roots of her first album, giving listeners 13 melodic reasons to fall in love with this young songstress all over again.

Lead single "The Kingdom" instantly opens with a more aggressive and pop-heavy sound, but don't be fooled by the driving, upbeat pace. At close listen, the lyrics delve into pretty serious territory as Dillon puts herself in the perspective of a woman who is unable to conceive. And though it's not unusual for Dillon to pen lyrics far beyond her years, many fans will be surprised by the album's obvious commercial appeal. With the exception of only a few tracks, each tune seems tailored for radio. Perhaps the most airwave-friendly of them all is the catchy "When You Love Someone," co-written with Ed Cash (Chris Tomlin, Matt Wertz), who once again serves as producer along with John Alagia (Lifehouse, John Mayer) and Will Hunt (Shawn McDonald, Shane & Shane). This track and a few others ("Are You Sure," "You Could Be the One") point to romantic interests and unrequited love, revealing a glimpse of the teenager hidden inside.

Influenced by her recent missions trip to India, Dillon's honest spiritual perspective shines on "Beggar's Heart," a musical assault on the senses and a standout cut. Incorporating an array of instruments, the song eloquently captures Dillon's writing at its best as she sings, *"When You build, it feels like You tear me apart/When You heal, it always leaves a scar/And even when You fill, You always leave me with a beggar's heart."* In a similar thematic vein, the closing track, "You Are on Our Side," combines lush orchestration with Dillon's profound words, appropriately concluding the best chapter of her ever-promising tenure.

LINDSAY WILLIAMS

BETHANY DILLON

VARIOUS

Glory Revealed: The Word of God in Worship
Reunion

File Under: Worship **Grade:** B+

A CLASSIC TAKE ON MODERN WORSHIP

Multi-artist worship projects are certainly not new to this scene, but in *Glory Revealed: The Word of God in Worship,* producer and contributor Mac Powell (Third Day) accomplishes something both unique and classic in Christian music. It is unique in that it walks away from the pop production elements and aesthetics most modern worship projects rely on and in that the lyrics are lifted straight from the Scriptures—word for word. It is classic in that, stylistically, it is remarkably reminiscent of the earliest contemporary "Jesus music" from the late '60s and early '70s in terms of style and delivery.

Layered vocals, almost exclusively acoustic instruments and sweet, folk-pop melodies recall the best moments of classic bands such as Love Song, The Imperials, Maranatha! and even elements of '70s-era Bill Gaither Trio. With vocals up front and only modest musical interludes, *Glory Revealed* is a step back in time, but not quite as far back as bluegrass or country territory as passersby might think.

Though billed as "Americana" by the label, in the case of *Glory Revealed*, we hear pop-folk song arrangements dressed down with acoustic guitars, mandolin, banjo and dobro, but not authentic country or roots music, really. The title track, for instance, utilizes "Americana" instruments (including some transcendent fiddle), but vocalist Candi Pearson-Shelton (Passion Worship Band, Overflow) delivers a straight-ahead pop vocal that would sound fine with a MercyMe or Casting Crowns arrangement. The same is true of Michael W. Smith's "Come Worship the King" and the fist single "By His Wounds," which features former Backstreet Boy Brian Littrell, Casting Crowns' Mark Hall, Steven Curtis Chapman and Powell. That's not to say the songs are not good; they are excellent in fact. It's just that authentic country music goes beyond instrumentation and into arrangements. There's just not

enough twang on here to call it country. For some fans that will be good news. Others will wish Powell had taken it a bit farther south.

The *sola Scriptura* approach is a fabulously effective choice for a project like this. The understated production (Powell knows a good bit about great tone.) allows room for and seems to even encourage the listener to join in once he or she knows the part. All told, this is certainly an excellent collection of new worship songs with classic roots both musically and lyrically.

JOHN J. THOMPSON

NICOLE C. MULLEN

Sharecropper's Seed, Vol. 1
Word

File Under: Pop **Grade:** B

SITTING AT THE FEET OF WISDOM

Few artists in any genre have the ability to continually re-imagine their sound in order to remain compellingly current, while maintaining a fluid connection to their musical roots. Nicole C. Mullen is one such artist, and her latest project, *Sharecropper's Seed*, perfectly illustrates that point. Flowing effortlessly between smooth, Celine Dion-esque pop to creaky, Alanis Morissette-meets-Patti LaBelle alt-R&B, Mullen struts, skips and meanders through 10 tracks that are at least as autobiographical and family-focused as her self-titled debut from way back at the turn of the century.

On the title track, a sparsely orchestrated, acoustic guitar-driven ballad, Mullen traces her roots back to her grandfather, a wise old sharecropper who was careful to pray for a bountiful harvest in both the natural and spiritual realms. Like her grandfather, Mullen reminds us that we are all merely sojourners on this earth, and that any good fruit that comes today is probably the result of careful planting from generations past. "Baby Love," the album's closer, finds Mullen reaching forward to the next generation as she croons a peace-filled lullaby to her children.

But lest you think she is too smooth to groove, "So in Love," finds Mullen drawing vocal inspiration from a rusty hinge, groaning, creaking, then slithering over a smoldering blues riff that would feel right at home on the Mississippi delta. "Under the Shadow" sports a light Caribbean flair, mercifully sans steel drums, while "Fall" uses well-placed fiddle to evoke a new-country vibe with an urban twist.

Mullen's greatest success has always come from her soaring, genre-defying ballads like "Redeemer," "Call on Jesus" and "On My Knees." While there are numerous candidates for radio success on this project, including "Touch," "I'm Convinced" and "I Wish," all of which contain some serious spiritual meat, there doesn't seem to be a blockbuster in the bunch.

MIKE PARKER

THE CHARIOT

THE CHARIOT

The Fiancée
Solid State

File Under: Hardcore **Grade:** A-

THIS YEAR'S MODEL

There was a buzz and then a bit of a letdown surrounding The Chariot's debut release back in 2004. Josh Scogin was the original lead singer of Norma Jean, and the bar was set high for his new band. After line-up changes and an EP, The Chariot is back with *The Fiancée*, a brilliant sophomore effort that lives up to the hype surrounding Josh and the band's energetic live shows.

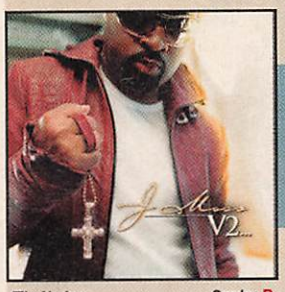
This year's Chariot model is a complete redesign and a much better ride with guitarists Jon Terry and Dan Eaton, drummer Jake Ryan and bass player Jon Kindler. Josh's trademark vocal screams are intact on every track and just what you would expect, but the songwriting has more traction with better riffs, structure and melody. There are some almost prog rock-like riffs alongside some very interesting chord changes and intricacies in songs such as "Back to Back" and "They Faced Each Other" that you won't find on many hardcore releases. What makes this sound like a totally new band though is the production, primarily handled this time around by Matt Goldman (Copeland, Underoath).

Sometimes the song titles and lyrics on albums this intense take a back seat to the music, and that's a shame. If you read the song titles on *The Fiancée* in order, they tell a story that is actually from an old poem many a mother has recited to her child—very clever. Lyrically, Josh actually equals the emotional impact of the music. In the song "Forgive Me Nashville," he sings, "*You found out everyone preaching God had turned off all their lights/For they have buried their teeth inside a contradicting life.*"

The album's packaging also deserves noting. In a world of downloads, you don't hear a whole lot about album art any more; but this one could win a GRAMMY® for "Best Packaging of the Year." Fans will definitely want to buy the actual CD instead of downloading this one.

This is not your father's Chariot. This is an all-out audio assault on your senses, and both the "hard" and the "core" are turned up to 11. The new sound is heavy and good, and it just may be a prototype for what comes next.

DR. TONY SHORE



J MOSS

V2...The Voice Returns
PAJAM/Gospo Centric

File Under: Urban/Gospel **Grade:** B-

A SEQUEL IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD

Chalk it up to talent, a stroke of luck or his multiple connections in the music industry, but it took singer/producer J Moss just one album to quickly cement himself as one of urban Gospel's fastest-rising stars. Glitz and glamour are nothing new to him—as one-third of production team PAJAM, he's worked with the genre's brightest, including Hezekiah Walker, Kierra "KiKi" Sheard and Byron Cage, to name a few.

But his national debut, *The J Moss Project*, proved that he was a solo artist in his own right. The album was a case study on how to mix and match sensibilities without alienating fans, and the results showed: the effort yielded a quarter-million discs sold, a chart-topping song ("We Must Praise") and a bevy of awards and nominations.

The fields are ripe for the follow-up, and *V2...The Voice Returns* is one in every sense of the word. Please excuse the silly, over-the-top title: the move is trademark J Moss, who, like in the many songs he's co-produced, is unabashed to name-drop—or at least allude to—himself or his production team.

The funny thing is, J Moss doesn't need shameless self-promotion. As *V2* attests, his music has enough verve and character to stand on its own merits. In a way, J Moss is like urban Gospel's version of R. Kelly, not just in vocal or rhythmic style, but in the individuality of his artistry.

One needs not look further than the apologetic "I'm Not Perfect" to just *know* it's J Moss—the pitch-perfect tenor, the thick R&B groove, the multi-layered harmonies are all characteristic identity marks of the singer and his PAJAM troupe. That these elements can be pinpointed so easily is problematic: Does "The Voice" have anything to offer that he *didn't* already try either on his debut or someone else's album?

Yes and no. When stripped to the basics, *V2* is a retread of done-heard tricks—and very good ones at that—that have worked before. "Florida," for example, is this album's "I Wanna Be," beats-per-minute and all. Elsewhere, the heartfelt "Abundantly" is *V2*'s requisite "We Must Praise," while the smooth "Let It Go" is "Livin' 4" on autopilot.

These similarities don't belie the album's production values—PAJAM knows how to make hits, and *V2*'s surefire R&B stamp is no exception. At times, J Moss will even throw us a curveball or two—"The Operator" is an irresistible slice of neo-gospel—but these in no way neutralize the overall familiarity of the disc.

ANDREE FARIAS

J MOSS

THIRD DAY

Chronology, Volume One (1996-2000)
(CD/DVD)
Essential

File Under: Rock **Grade:** A

A CONSUMING PROJECT

Third Day's 1996 debut album caught Christian music by surprise during an era dominated by pop singers, ballad-crooning foursomes and emerging acoustic acts. Commend the earthy Atlanta rockers for continuing to break the mold, shattering the standard "greatest hits" marketing scheme and offering fresh twists on songs we love. At the same time, give props to Essential Records for its marketing savvy in packaging all this great music, video and commentary into a two-fold rollout that producers of the *Matrix* trilogy would appreciate.

Chronology, Volume One spans the inaugural five years and first four albums of one of the past decade's most successful acts (i.e., six million albums sold, a couple dozen Dove and GRAMMY® Awards, 24 No. 1 singles). Its sequel is due to drop Aug. 7.

This initial two-disc (CD and DVD) set features 17 audio tracks; five music videos; six Dove Awards concert performances; and eight "bootleg" videos providing great fly-on-the-wall moments that help viewers to more deeply understand the five men behind the music.

Among the CD highlights are new mixes of standards such as "Nothing at All," "Consuming Fire" and the riveting "Thief," as well as live versions of "Blackbird" and "Alien." Two cuts from a 1999 EP *Southern Tracks*, "Long Time Comin'" and "She Sings in Riddles," add a nice surprise to the collection.

Pleasant surprises continue on the DVD. The "bootleg" videos date as far back as 1992 amid small church audiences, unveiling a Mac Powell voice that was at least an octave higher and the debut Third Day performances of Tai Anderson and David Carr. These clips and the music videos feature the band members in silhouette, commenting on their memories of the performances, rationale for specific shots and the logic of certain fashion choices. These clips expose the band's roots; they represent an extra seat on the tour bus as the members reminiscence on the journey of a potent music ministry. Extensive historical liner notes and photography further round out the experience of this project.

The cumulative outcome of all this material is a hearty meal that even the peripheral Third Day enthusiast will consume. And, delightfully, a second serving remains on the 2007 menu, with a 10-year video documentary tagged as one of the entrees.

JOHN MICHAEL DE MARCO

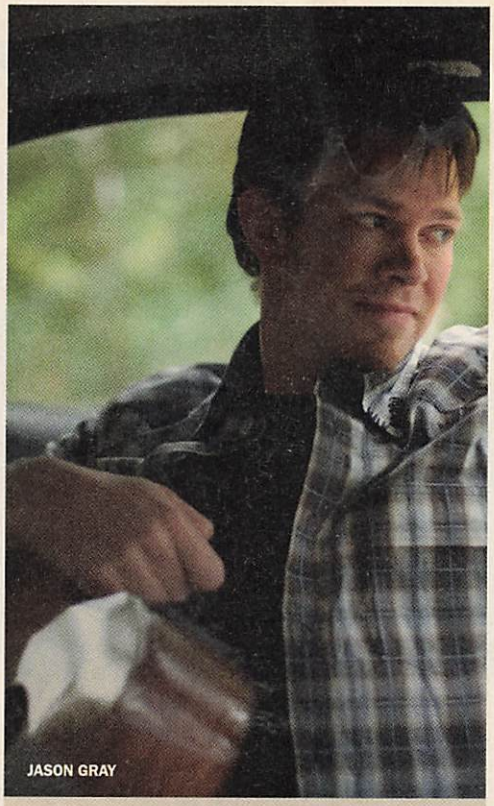
THE SHOWDOWN

Temptation Come My Way
Mono vs. Stereo

File Under: Metal/Hard Music **Grade:** B+

MAKE SURE YOUR SPEAKERS ARE MOUNTED SECURELY...

The 2004 debut album by The Showdown was quite revolutionary, probably the truest throwback to '80s metal that the evolving hard music genre had ever seen. While The Darkness straddled the line between mockery and sincerity, this band was true metal. *A Chorus of Obliteration* showcased a trademark sound rarely heard these days—double guitar leads, shredding through brisk scales like twin Randy Rhoads on musical display. It's a wonder that Ozzy Osbourne didn't hire them away.



JASON GRAY

One of the first things to notice with the band's follow-up, *Temptation Come My Way*, is the stellar production. Instead of two guitars cutting through a mix that showcases the talents of Josh Childers and Travis Bailey, it sounds like there are 500 guitars ripping your ears off with a tight rhythm section that performs as one—a true ensemble of muscle. "Fanatics and Whores" starts things off with a heavy Southern metal attack akin to Maylene & The Sons of Disaster (another quasi-revolutionary outfit of late), ranting and raving about false teachers. While the second track utilizes a high-end riff to introduce the song and is accompanied by the cowbell (Yes, the cowbell!), the overall sound of this album is more along the lines of tunes such as "From the Mouth of Gath Comes Terror" and "Dagon Undone" from *A Chorus...*

Instead of solos, it's all about the rhythm and the heavy groove. They pull it off well, but it's a tad disappointing to hear those identifying sounds relegated to the tenth track—"I, Victim." Whether this is a case of identity crisis brought on by the band or dictated by the producer, the true growth of The Showdown's abilities might be somewhat overshadowed by the elements no one would have guessed to be missing...or in the background of the mix.

DOUG VAN PELT

JASON GRAY

All the Lovely Losers
Centricity

File Under: Singer/Songwriter/Pop **Grade:** A

ANTHEM FOR THE UNDERDOGS

There's something refreshing and inspiring about an artist who embraces the reality that we're all losers at heart, each facing our own insecurities. And singer/songwriter Jason Gray does just that as he lays his heart on the line through his music and stands up for "the little people." With his label debut, *All the Lovely Losers* (Centricity), the one-time independent artist offers songs laced with hope and surrender with an everyday approach.

Gray's songwriting is honest and insightful, each of the 13 tracks encouraging listeners to find strength in God through admitting weakness. The first track, "Blessed Be," sets the tone of the album, with a Brit-rock sound reminiscent of the mainstream band Keane. On "Sing

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JOY ELECTRIC

Through Me," Gray writes, "*I just pray that the words will come/When You sing through me/The song I long to sing to You,*" affirming that his art is not about him. Other lyrical gems include "*I don't want to move unless You're moving me*" ("Move"), and "*Your heart lays me bare/The shaping of my soul/The cut makes me whole*" ("The Cut").

The respect Gray draws in the artist community is evident as Sara Groves, Andrew Peterson, Waterdeep's Lori Chafer and PFR's Joel Hanson contribute their distinct talents to the album. It's no wonder. Although many of the tracks may have a pop-like feel, Gray's lyrics are full of depth and truth—his songwriting could easily draw comparisons to that of Steven Curtis Chapman or the late Rich Mullins.

It is clear from his words that Gray knows what it's like to struggle. Growing up as a chronic stutterer in an abusive home has shaped his upbringing and forced him to rely on God for strength in his adversities. Today, he strives to stand up for those less fortunate and is a spokesperson for World Vision, with a heart for AIDS orphans. Gray's artist bio sums up his passion for the "losers" as he says, "...For those of us who don't have it in us to be impressive or strong, who couldn't get our act together if our lives depended on it, the good news is that there is a preferred place as honored guests in God's kingdom for us and that all the losers are made lovely by His grace." Blessed are the losers.

RACHEL HARROLD

JOY ELECTRIC

The Otherly Opus
Tooth & Nail

File Under: Electronic **Grade: A-**

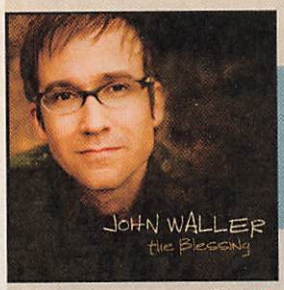
YET MORE ANALOGUE SYNTHESIZED GOODNESS

After 10 albums and seven EPs, it's no surprise that the recent works of Joy Electric show a maturing of Ronnie Martin's skills in songwriting and production, along with his abilities as a musician. Martin is a veteran of the music scene, and Joy Electric has grown up.

Like all but the earliest Joy Electric albums, this recording was performed by Martin exclusively on old-school analogue synthesizers—no computer samples, drum machines or guitars here—and what can you say? The man knows his way around a Moog, and Martin continues to create new and interesting sounds with his machines. *The Otherly Opus* sounds both rich and deep, without ever feeling too crowded and Martin's vocals are bold and varied, with interesting harmonies throughout.

Lyrically, Joy Electric albums have always shown a penchant for fairy tales, but *The Otherly Opus* seems to move past that—or, rather, before that—into the days of legend and even the events that preceded them. Many of the songs seem to deal with transitions on both personal and global levels ("Write Your Last Paragraph," "The Ushering in of the Magical Era"), and "The Memory of Alpha" is even a retelling of humanity's Fall in the Garden. *The Otherly Opus* suggests a sense of a faraway place that time swept away long ago and a rediscovery of what was lost.

ANDREW SCATES



JOHN WALLER

The Blessing
Beach Street

File Under: Pop/Modern Worship **Grade: A-**

ENCORE!

Consider John Waller a major buzz artist for 2007. Fresh off being named one of *Billboard* magazine's "Faces to Watch," the Colorado-based worship leader, songwriter and erstwhile lead singer of According to John becomes the latest signee with Beach Street, a Reunion Records imprint that's also home to Casting Crowns.

Speaking of the Crowns, Waller's passionate style and church ministry mindset impressed that band's front man, Mark Hall, so much that Hall helped Waller get signed. What's more, Hall lends his voice to Waller's debut

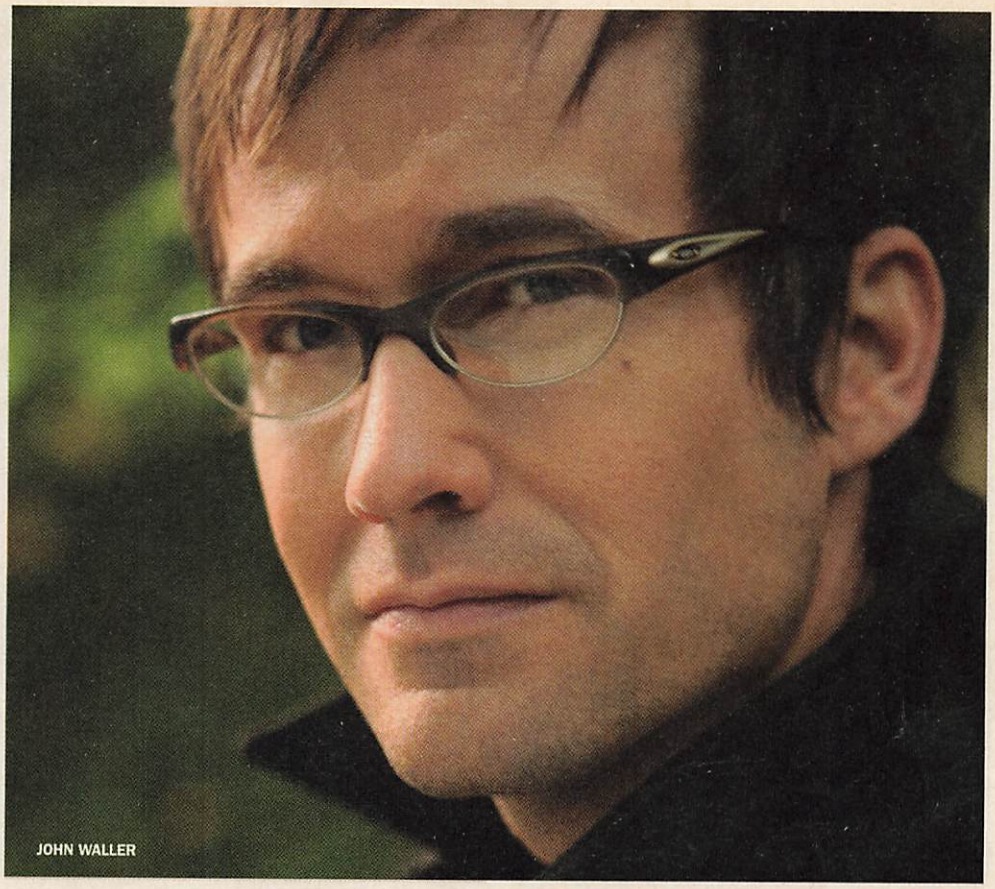
title track, which challenges believers to speak positively into the lives of others.

Waller's distinctive sound reflects the praise-oriented heart of a humble, devoted servant. From the propulsive opener "Calling for a Flood" to the balladic intonations of "Breathe on Me," Waller's robust, inimitable vocals and reflective lyrics should resonate well with fans of modern worship purveyors such as Chris Tomlin and David Crowder.

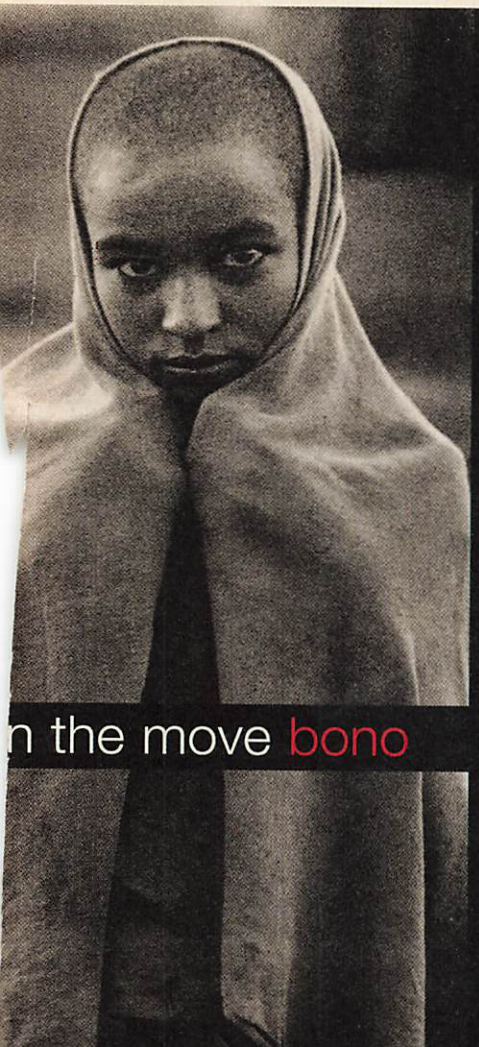
Bright spots occur on buoyant tracks like "Love to Say Your Name," wherein Waller reminds listeners of the power of verbalizing God's multifaceted moniker ("*Elohim...Adonai...Jehovah Jireh...El Shaddai*"). Then there's his fresh take on the prodigal son evidenced on poignant cut "Still Calls Me Son," which tackles the reality of universal rebellion.

As one who has previously struggled with depression, Waller conveys his message with refreshing authenticity and unabashed openness. And while the 10-track disc seems to end a bit abruptly, it's sure to leave listeners wanting more. Bottom line: the buzz is certainly well deserved.

DAVID McCREARY



JOHN WALLER



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GRUPO NELSON

JACKSON WATERS

JACKSON WATERS

Come Undone
Word

File Under: Pop/Rock

Grade: B

"INSERT NAME HERE"

That's what the headline might as well read. After all, the last few spring seasons have birthed a radio-friendly-buzz band that arrives on the scene to stake its territory in Christian radio. Two years ago, it was The Afters. Last year, it was NEEDTOBREATHE. This year? Jackson Waters.

Each of the aforementioned bands possesses the same sonic qualities: larger-than-life hooks, memorable choruses, strong pop sensibilities and formulaic song structures meant to maximize radio spins. And Jackson Waters is more than qualified for this year's opening.

Come Undone explodes from the outset with pop/rock likeability that builds with each successive track. "Different" gets things started and quickly showcases the band's musicianship, while even-handed production from Rob Hawkins (David Crowder Band) allows frontman David Leonard's crystal-clear vocals to shine through. Lead single "Give Me Amazing Grace" is tailor-made to put Jackson Waters near the top of the pop charts, likely paving the way for several more singles.

Leonard co-wrote all tracks on *Come Undone*, enlisting some impressive help including Steve Hindalong ("God of Wonders") and Jason Ingram ("Resonate"), among others. Lyrically, the tracks provide an outlet for Leonard to find God in the circumstances around him, and he touches on relationships, times of despair and the gift of being among friends.

Although we've been down this musical road before, it's a path intended for heavy travel. The Arkansas-based quintet seems ready for the spotlight that it brings.

MATT CONNER

newreleases

APRIL 3

Vicky Beeching	*Painting the Invisible* (Sparrow)
Ashley Cleveland	*Before the Daylight's Shot* (TAG)
Bethany Dillon	*Waking Up* (Sparrow)
Tim Hughes	*Holding Nothing Back* (WorshipTogether)
Kutless	*Strong Tower Deluxe Edition* (BEC)
Heath McNease	*The Heath McNease Fanclub Meets Tonight* (7 Spin)
Geoff Moore	*Speak to Me* (Rocketown)
Nicole C. Mullen	*Sharecropper's Seed, Vol. 1* (Word)
The Almost	*Southern Weather* (Tooth & Nail/Virgin)
This Beautiful Republic	*Even Heroes Need a Parachute* (Forefront)
The Chariot	*The Fiancée* (Solid State)
Various	*Beautiful Worship* (INO)
Various	*WOW Worship: Blue* (Integrity)
Willie Will	*Reflection* (Beatmart)
Kelly Willard	*Paga* (Autumn)

APRIL 10

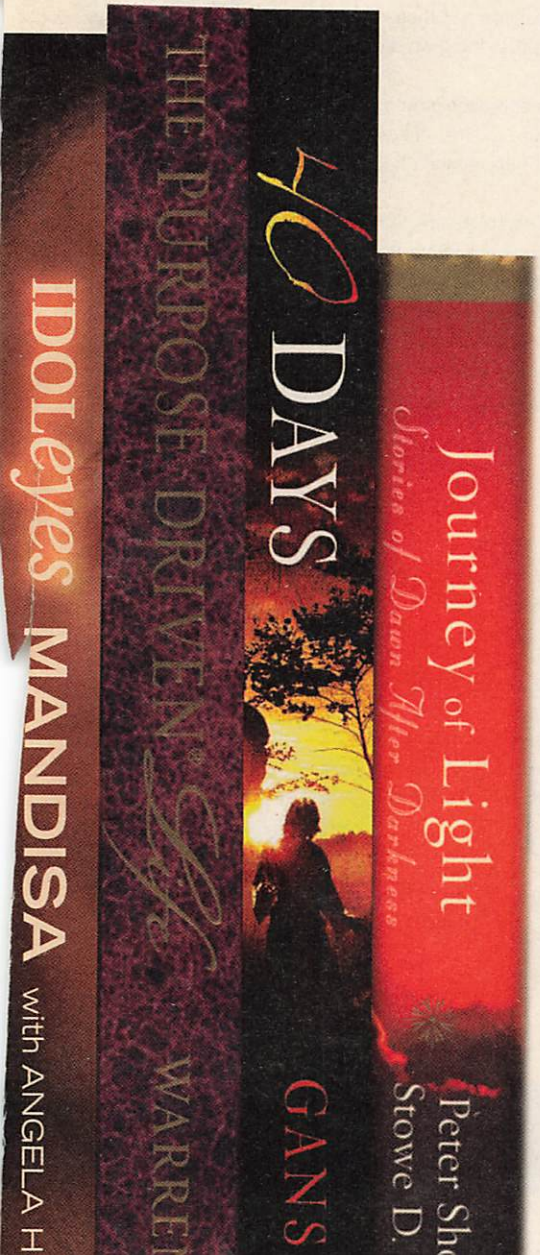
33Miles	*33Miles* (INO)
Cali	*Cali* (Levity/CBUJ/Infinity)
Todd Fields	*Word of God Speak–The Worship Session* (Integrity)
KJ-52	*The Yearbook* (BEC)
Brenda Lee	*Gospel Duets with Treasured Friends* (Provident)
The Murrills	*Family Prayer* (Verity)
Sandi Patty	*Falling Forward* (INO)

APRIL 17

FLAME	*Our World: Fallen* (Cross Movement)
Until June	*Until June* (Flicker/Sony)
Various	*The Best Worship Songs in the World* (Integrity)

FAITH, FAT AND FAME

"American Idol" alum **MANDISA** shares her story in ***IdolEyes: My New Perspective on Faith, Fat and Fame*** (Tyndale House), co-authored with Angela Hunt. In the book, Mandisa speaks candidly about her life-long battle with food addiction and how the now famous, derogatory remarks made by judge Simon Cowell on live television provided her the opportunity to become a positive role model for millions of women. Mandisa demonstrates that healthy self-esteem and personal beauty come only when a woman accepts herself as a unique and much-loved woman of God's creation. "I am a living witness that God can do immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine," she exclaims.



"NEW" TOLKIEN IN STORES

An unfinished book by **J.R.R. TOLKIEN**, ***The Children of Hurin*** (Houghton Mifflin), sees print for the first time as a whole, complete work in April. The first complete book by Tolkien since the posthumous *Silmarillion* in 1977, this epic tale reunites fans of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* with the rich landscape and characters unique to Tolkien. Special features include a detailed new map in addition to a jacket and color paintings by Alan Lee. Tolkien originally began writing *The Children of Hurin* in 1918 but abandoned it; son Christopher Tolkien has spent 30 years working on a fully edited, authoritative edition.

GOTTA LOTTA PURPOSE

More than 30 million copies later, **RICK WARREN**'s best-selling ***The Purpose-Driven Life*** (Zondervan) has finally come out in paperback. Pegged by *Publishers Weekly* as the "best-selling hardback book in American history," back when sales hit 20 million copies (in September 2004), News Corp's Rupert Murdoch toasted its success at a lavish party in New York City. But Warren—pastor of Saddleback Church, a Southern Baptist megachurch in California—hasn't let the success go to his head: Rick and wife Kay give away 90 percent of their income to charitable causes.

CSI: JERUSALEM

Award-winning author **ALTON GANSKY** has two recent books that examine the Easter event from two very different perspectives: His novel ***Crime Scene Jerusalem*** (River Oak) is about a modern-day forensic detective miraculously transported to ancient Jerusalem in the days following Jesus' crucifixion. The non-fiction work, ***40 Days*** (B&H Publishing), sheds light on the recorded appearances of Jesus following His resurrection. Through these two books—taken alone or in tandem—Gansky gives readers much to consider about the death and life of Jesus.

IN THE LIGHT

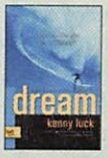
Employing their respective gifts as filmmaker and songwriter, **PETER & STOWE SHOCKEY** weave together a moving narrative demonstrating how healing can occur at any time through the most unlikely sources and illustrating how seemingly insignificant actions are often divinely inspired in ***Journey of Light: Stories of Dawn After Darkness*** (Doubleday).

B(u)y the Book

Check out these new releases...

In what he terms the "God-and-country shouting match," evangelical leader **RICHARD LAND** explores the heated debate between more traditional religious believers, those with a more liberal faith and those hostile to religious faith in ***The Divided States of America*** (W).

As a founder of the 24-7 Prayer interdenominational community, **PETE GREIG** believes in the power of prayer. But when his wife was diagnosed with a life-threatening brain tumor, their prayers were met with resounding silence. In ***God on Mute: Engaging the Silence of Unanswered Prayer*** (Regal), Greig grapples with some of the most difficult questions people face about God's goodness and power.



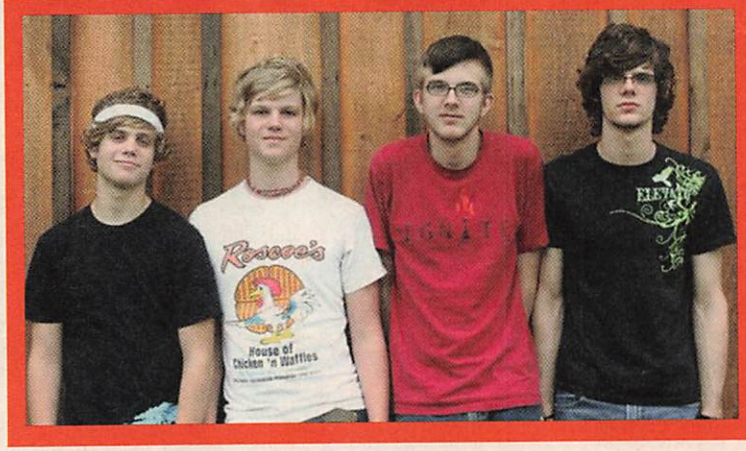
KENNY LUCK returns with ***Dream*** (WaterBrook), the second book in his "God's Man" series. According to Luck, "Reality says that five percent of life is extremely satisfying. Another five percent is extremely disappointing. The rest—the other 90 percent—is just life, plain peanut butter and jelly." But it's what we do with the peanut butter and jelly that matters.

With ***The Culturally Savvy Christian: A Manifesto for Deepening Faith and Enriching Popular Culture in an Age of Christianity-Lite*** (Jossey-Bass/Wiley), **DICK STAUB** examines the cause-and-effect relationship between the quality and depth of our spiritual life and the richness of our cultural life.

In ***97 Random Thoughts About Life, Love & Relationships*** (Revell), **JUSTIN LOOKADOO**, best-selling author of *Dateable*, leads a pied piper's charge toward making God and biblical principles culturally relevant to a generation of text message messengers and IMers.

"FREE TRIP TO HEAVEN, DETAILS INSIDE!" It's just one of more than 160 signs featured in **STEVE & PAM PAULSON**'s ***Church Signs Across America*** (Overlook). The title says it all—a fun and artful look at some of the best and most thoughtful church signs around.

WHO IS THE FOLLOWING?



>> MEET STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN'S FAVORITE NEW ROCK BAND...

Instead of being known as one of the greatest solo artists in Christian music history, **Steven Curtis Chapman's** musical legacy may turn out to be the fact he fathered half of one rockin' band—**The Following**. In addition to Steven's sons **Caleb** (guitar and lead vocals) and **Will** (drums), The Following includes the **Lipscomb** brothers **Dale** (bass) and **D.J.** (lead guitar and vocals).

Fender Telecaster

While most bands made up of members all in their teens are happy to be playing for 100 people, these guys have spent the last three months on the "Winter Jam Tour" backing up their old man as well as playing their own music for thousands and thousands of people every night. "It's pretty crazy," says Will. "We're a band who's never really toured, and the first thing we are put into is playing in front of 10,000 people every night, which is great."

Caleb, who composes the majority of The Following's music, and I had the chance to talk about his approach to songwriting. "I usually write with an acoustic guitar. It starts out as a musical idea, and then I write lyrics to it." he explains. "I'll always have an idea of what I want the song to be about, kind of like a theme, but not lyrics really. Then a musical idea happens, and then the actual lyrics come."

Risen Drums

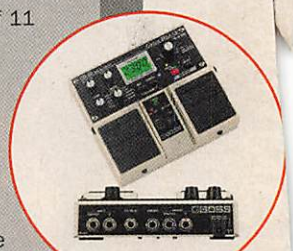
Caleb may be writing with an acoustic guitar, but his live show is all about loud, electric guitars, a huge bass guitar and slamming drums. Like his dad, he plays a Fender Telecaster electric guitar, which he runs through a Boss DD-20 Giga Delay into a Mesa Boogie Dual Rectifier amp. Brother Will plays Risen drums and Paiste Cymbals. D.J.'s main axe is an Epiphone Les Paul through a Gabriel Amp. He also uses the Giga Delay pedal as well as the Visual Sound Route 66 and Jekyll & Hyde pedals. Dale plays a Fender P bass through an Ampeg SVT bass rig.

As of now, The Following doesn't have a full-length album, but the band does have a three-song EP that gives a small glimpse into its sonic space. If you weren't one of the 300,000 people that saw The Following at Winter Jam, you can pick up the disc at **myspace.com/thefollowing.**

BOSS DD-20 GIGA DELAY PEDAL

The BOSS DD-20 Giga Delay provides a delay time of up to 23 seconds and more user memory than any other delay pedal out there right now. The delay time can be quickly set using the push-button knob or by using tap tempo, and there is a choice of 11 different modes including sound-on-sound recording, classic tape delay, analog delay and reverse delay.

A couple of the pedal's nifty traits are its "Time Advance" and "Seamless Switching" features. "Time Advance" allows the user to quickly switch between fine and coarse delay settings. When the Delay Time knob is rotated, the time changes in increments of milliseconds. If the knob is pressed while being turned, the time scrolls in larger increments. The "intelligent knob" doesn't require you to continue to rotate it. Instead, it senses the initial direction and accelerates the scrolling function at the rate of about a second of delay per second of real time. When you get close to the setting you want, just stop pressing the knob, and then fine-tune the delay in milliseconds.



Boss DD-20

"Seamless Switching" allows the user to switch from one delay mode to another without suddenly losing the audio of the first mode. This mode also allows you to create a loop/delay pattern, then step on the "Off" pedal to keep the loop/delay going at the feedback level you've set it at while you play whatever you want over it, without adding to the loop/delay (á la Phil Keaggy).

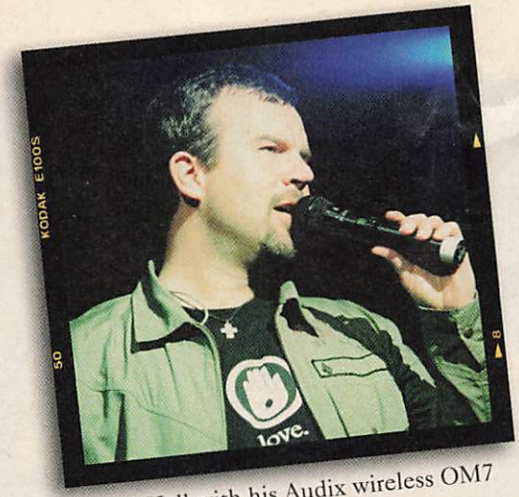
If you are in the market for a delay pedal, the DD-20 is worth checking out. It lists for $299 but can easily be found in the $180 price range.

GEAR LINKS: For more information on the gear on this page, visit: **bosscorp.co.jp/products/en/dd-20/, risendrums.com, paiste.com, visualsound.net, epiphone.com, gabtone.com, fender.com, ampeg.com**

Russ Long is an award-winning recording engineer who has helmed Gold and Platinum albums by newsboys and Sixpence None the Richer as well as recordings by Chris Tomlin, Relient K, MercyMe, Wilco, Phil Keaggy, Over the Rhine and others. Russ has created an educational DVD on studio engineering tailored for singers, songwriters and home studio enthusiasts. For more information, visit **audioinstruction.com**.

ROAD REPORT: Casting Crowns and Audix Wireless Microphones

AUDIX



Mark Hall with his Audix wireless OM7

"If every company in the music industry was like Audix, the music business would be a better place! Thanks Audix, your microphones allow us to sound great...you make us proud to use your name on and off the stage."

—Mark Hall/ Lead Vocalist Casting Crowns

With an uncompromising spirit and a powerful message, the music of the Platinum selling and Dove Award winning "Casting Crowns" exploded onto the Christian Music landscape in 2004. With the release of their second CD "Lifesong" on Beach Street Records, their touring schedule and equipment demands are greater than ever before. The wireless microphone they rely on night after night? The Audix RAD360.

"The RAD360 system from Audix is a beautiful thing. From start to finish, you can't find a better thought out wireless solution than this!" —Darren Hughes/FOH Engineer for Casting Crowns

Audix RAD360 Wireless Systems feature:

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- The longest battery life (over 12 hours on 2 alkaline AA batteries)
- Interchangeable OM series head assemblies
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- Optional antenna distribution system available for multiple system operation

Pick up a copy of "Lifesong" and make sure to catch "Casting Crowns" in a city near you. Visit www.castingcrowns.com for touring schedules. And, if you or your church is looking for the most reliable wireless microphone available, trust Audix to deliver.

Casting Crowns and the Audix RAD360 wireless system...a perfect team.

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standingroomonly | your guide to concerts

by Andy Argyrakis

From left: Melissa Brock, Dave Ghazarian and Tricia Brock of Superchick; David Curtis and Lyle Chastain of Run Kid Run.

["*Beauty From Pain 1.1* TOUR": SUPERCHICK & RUN KID RUN]

SOUTHRIDGE CHURCH | KALAMAZOO, MI — FEBRUARY 17, 2007

Stepping into the presence of Superchick on its latest cross-country jaunt was like experiencing a delightfully nostalgic time warp back to the 1980s, but with today's top musical trends accentuating the old-school attitudes. The group took the stage to the blasting stereo sounds of Huey Lewis & the News' "The Power of Love" (*Back to the Future* anyone?), wore T-shirts sporting *Miami Vice* and Andy Warhol designs, covered Pat Benatar's "Love Is a Battlefield" and even had a replica World Wrestling Federation championship belt on the drum riser.

But the Hulkamania-charged quintet didn't promote gratuitous messages like the "Me Decade" so notoriously supported. Instead, they used the props as mere fun, reminding all that retro is, indeed, back in vogue. Though the gang focused on the hipper side of yesterday (think The Go Go's) mixed with more contemporary influences (Black Eyed Peas or No Doubt), its real goal was to instill themes of self-esteem and purity on a mostly teenage crowd.

The show opened with "It's On," a perfect call to arms to not only get the party started but boldly run the race for Christ on a daily basis. From there came "Pure," a boisterous call to purge away any of life's unfitting distractions, along with "Bowling Ball," about breaking away from a bad relationship.

Those tracks, and many others throughout the band's 75-minute feel-good set, focused on the current *Beauty From Pain 1.1* (Columbia/Inpop), a general market makeover edition of the original album, loaded with remixes and bonus material. Those album and stage sounds picked up where Superchick's previous projects left off, taking hints of ska and punk with slick samples, Tricia Brock's feisty vocals, plus a tradeoff between alternative rock & roll and leg-shaking soul.

New artistic standouts included the celebratory potpourri "Anthem," the keyboard-centered ballad "Beauty From Pain" and the rhythmic slams of "One Girl Revolution." The early-career concert favorite "Karaoke Superstars" scored an extended appearance backed by the berserk bass playing of Matt Dally and foundation rattling guitar battles between Melissa Brock and Dave Ghazarian. Yet, given the absence of studio whiz and turntable man Max Hsu (who rarely tours with the group due to church commitments), some of the band's more elaborate electronic elements were missing. But drummer Brandon Estelle stepped up to the plate the best he could to insert some additional percussion rumblings and carnivorous cymbal crashes, especially during "Song 4 Tricia (Princes and Frogs)."

The most memorable portion of the evening came when the Brock sisters introduced the groove-marinated ballad "We Live," reminding all to live each moment to the fullest because we never know the date of our last day on earth. Given the group's youthful fanbase, lines like "*There's a cross on the side of the road/Where a mother lost a son/How could she know that morning he left/Would be their last time*" truly hit home. All in all, Superchick dually scored by connecting with its core audience and allowing older folks some retro indulgence combined with a crash course on what's currently cool.

Tooth & Nail touring titans Run Kid Run, who opened the show, also brought pop/punk flavors to the table, giving the guys on the tightly packed floor some extra energy for crowd surfing. Though security was quick to keep everyone's feet on the floor, a collective sea of fists pumped to the militant beats of "The Modern March" and "Sing to Me." The aggressive support act also gave its version of a relationship parting ways with "Move On," but provided an underlying message that, even in the midst of a broken heart, God is the ultimate healer.

CLUB CONNECTION

[Giving concertgoers a look at one of the country's coolest Christian venues]

Denver & The Mile High Orchestra

Considering both Superchick and Run Kid Run hail from Illinois, chances are, members have attended or even played at the popular venue **JESUS ALIVE**. Planted just a stone's throw away from Chicago's O'Hare International Airport in Bensenville, the location has played host to just about everyone on the touring circuit. Most recently the coffeehouse-styled club hosted **Bryan Duncan** and his newly assembled **Nehosoul Band** with previous performers including gut-rocker **Ashley Cleveland**, former Rich Mullins & A Ragamuffin Band member **Rick Elias** and swing staples **Denver & the Mile High Orchestra**.

Aside from a schedule packed with shows, Jesus Alive is a church with Sunday services plus Tuesday night Bible studies. Aside from conventional topics, discussions cover a Christian perspective on current events followed by a time of prayer. Other calendar highlights include sporadic open-mic nights and annual New Year's Eve celebrations.

For additional information on Jesus Alive, log on to ***jesusalive.org.*** *(Jesus Alive photo provided by venue.)*

HERE AND THERE

ARE YOU WITHIN A DAY'S DRIVE?
Here's a concert date you won't want to miss!

04/23 "Justice & Mercy Tour"
Flyleaf & Skillet, Sauget, IL

For the latest concert listings, check out **CCMmagazine.com**'s searchable tour database to find out when your favorite artists will play in a city near you.

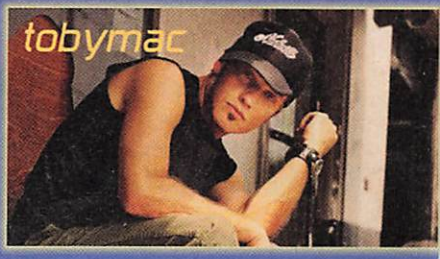
www.wayfm.com

Find your local station
or listen online.

WAY-FM

wayfm.com

My Life, My Radio



Hear WAY-FM On These Stations:

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COLORADO
89.7 WAY-FM Denver

FLORIDA
88.1 WAY-FM West Palm Beach
88.7 WAY-FM Fort Myers
88.1 WAY-FM Tallahassee

KANSAS
90.7 WAY-FM Wichita

KENTUCKY
88.1 WAY-FM Bowling Green

OREGON
89.7 WAY-FM Astoria

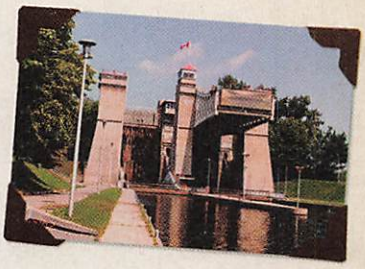
TENNESSEE
89.9 WAY-FM New Johnsonville
88.7 WAY-FM Nashville
88.3 WAY-FM Clarksville

WASHINGTON
90.3 WAY-FM Longview / Kelso

THINGS I ♥

With Thousand Foot Krutch's TREVOR MCNEVAN

>> **Hip Hop**—A couple of my faves...



>> My hometown, **Peterborough, Ontario, Canada**... It's so small and so beautiful, still one of my favorite places to go. I had this great cliff there where I'd go to write (and where I proposed to my wife), and it's actually home to the world's highest hydraulic liftlock—every town should have one.

>> My beautiful wife, **Erin**, the support system I couldn't do without.

With a new album in the works and an opening slot on tobyMac's "*Portable Sounds* Tour" running thru the end of the month, there's a lot to love about Thousand Foot Krutch. On the flip side, TREVOR MCNEVAN recently took time out of his hectic schedule to tell us what it is that *he* loves...

>> An amazing **God** who helps me through each day.

>> My parents, **Gord** and **Linda McNevan** (my role models). They've always believed in me. They bought me my first guitar and keyboard and put up with endless nights of weird noises coming from my room, working on music/beats.

>> My home church, the **"Selwyn Outreach Center"**... Joel (TFK bass player) and I used to be in the worship band there (haha, good times).

>> **Performing live**—I refuse to call the people who come to our shows "fans"; we call them "friends." This is my favorite shot of some "friends" at a show.

<< **Songwriting**—it's what I spend most of my time doing. It's the biggest privilege in the world to use the talents and abilities God's blessed you with. Here's a picture of my writing room, taken during a session with Hawk Nelson (I love these guys).

Thousand Foot Krutch's current album is called *The Art of Breaking* (Tooth & Nail). Look for a new album to release this fall. Check out **thousandfootkrutch.com** for more info.

CLASSIFIEDS

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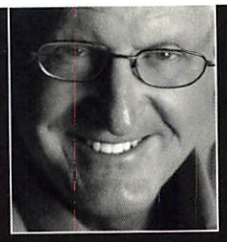
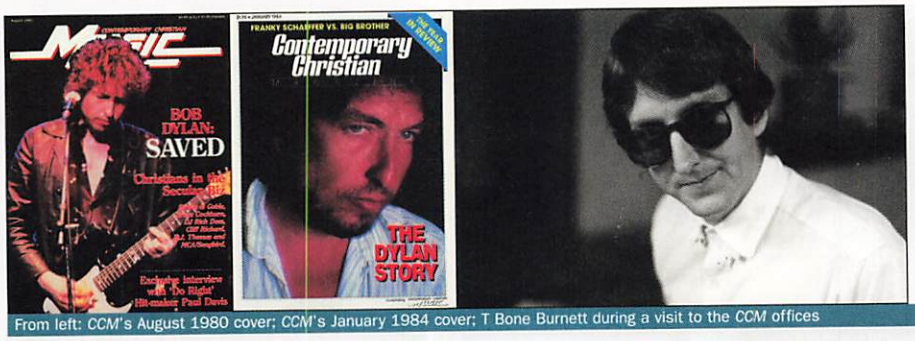


HISTORYMAKERS WITH JOHN STYLL
MOMENTS THAT SHAPED *CCM*

IF YOU THINK U2'S FAITH HAS BEEN A HOT TOPIC OF DISCUSSION AMONG THE CHRISTIAN MUSIC PRESS OVER THE YEARS, IMAGINE BEING THE EDITOR OF *CCM* WHEN "THE MOST IMPORTANT AMERICAN ROCK FIGURE SINCE ELVIS" PROFESSED HIS NEWFOUND FAITH IN JESUS.



From left: *CCM*'s August 1980 cover; *CCM*'s January 1984 cover; T Bone Burnett during a visit to the *CCM* offices

GOTTA SERVE SOMEBODY

When a celebrated public figure such as an actor or a rock star makes a decision to become a follower of Christ, word tends to spread quickly in the Christian community. This is due, first and foremost (hopefully), to our excitement that the person has found eternal life; but also because we hope he or she will have a positive impact on the culture. And, if we're honest, some of us feel a little bit proud when a famous person joins our ranks.

This magazine has chronicled the journeys of a number of mainstream artists who have become followers of Christ and released music that revealed their faith. But no story was bigger than the rumored conversion to Christianity in 1979 of Bob Dylan—"the most important American rock figure since Elvis Presley," according to *L.A. Times* rock critic Robert Hilburn. Dylan refused to speak about it publicly, but the release of *Slow Train Coming* that August spoke volumes.

Dylan was always a polarizing figure, but never more than during this phase of his career. He was "the guy who was forever zigging when the crowd was zagging" wrote Jim Edwards on this magazine's pages. Some fans were angry and/or confused, particularly "staunch followers of Dylan who must pit their uncompromising admiration for the man against their unwillingness to accept the truth he now proclaims."

Dylan's first public appearance after the release of *Slow Train* was a series of concerts at the Warfield Theatre in San Francisco. At the invitation of Bay Area concert promoter Jon Robberson, my wife and I attended the first of 14 sold-out shows. To the delight of some and the ire of others, Dylan performed none of his famous pre-conversion repertoire. All of the songs were either from *Slow Train* or the forthcoming *Saved*.

Dylan still said nothing from the stage about his beliefs that night, although between songs later in the series he said, "We are here tonight by the power of God. That's the only power. That's what I believe." The audience, especially that first night, seemed to feel cheated. They wanted to hear "Like a Rolling Stone" and Dylan's other hits. Legendary promoter Bill Graham, who put on the shows, said: "These people paid their money to hear Bob Dylan sing the songs he is known for; they didn't pay to get preached at."

At *CCM*, we tried every angle we could think of to land an interview with Dylan, to no avail. We talked to folks who knew him; we talked to musicians who played with him; we talked with pastors who had talked with him. Everyone was very protective of him and their relationships with him. After considerable effort, I got the unlisted phone number for his office and had numerous conversations with a very kind woman who was his assistant. As far as we knew, Dylan didn't even know of *CCM Magazine's* existence. But she did confide in me one day that he had a copy of it. But even she was unable to convince him to talk to us.

I can recall feeling extremely frustrated that we were never able to speak with Bob. I was finally able to let that go thanks to a wonderful conversation with musician/producer T Bone Burnett, who was a close friend of Dylan's. He was in the *CCM* offices to drop off something he had written for us, and he helped me understand why Bob was so reticent to talk with us. Nearly 30 years later, I don't remember exactly what he said, but I do know I felt much better after our talk.

But Dylan did speak to the *L.A. Times*. "I truly had a born-again experience, if you want to call it that," he told Robert Hilburn in a 1981 interview. "I always knew there was a God or creator of the mountains and the sea and all that kind of thing, but I wasn't conscious of Jesus and what that had to do with the supreme creator."

Dylan began to learn about Christianity through the Vineyard in California. He met with church pastors at the request of his girlfriend. "I was kind of skeptical, but I was also open," he said of that first meeting. "I asked lots of questions, like 'what's the son of God, what's all that mean?' and 'what does it mean—dying for my sins?'"

The first three albums released by Bob Dylan, following his conversion, have recently been reissued by Sony and, for the Christian market, Integrity Music. If you want to hear how one of the best songwriters of the modern era expresses his faith in song, I highly recommend them to you.

Finally, as you may have read elsewhere in this issue, *CCM Magazine* is making a few changes beginning with next month's issue. Thus, the "HistoryMakers" column concludes with this issue. It has been fun being back with you for the past year or so. Best wishes to the *CCM* staff as they make a little history of their own!

JOHN STYLL is the president of the Gospel Music Association. Before taking its helm, he launched *CCM Magazine* in 1978 and captained our ship for more than 20 years. For more information on the Gospel Music Association or this month's GMA Dove Awards, which it oversees, go to **gospelmusic.org.**

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